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BIG GAME

OTHER BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

STALKS ABROAD

THE BIG GAME OF CENTRAL AND WESTERN CHINA

BRITISH DEER HEADS

HUNTING AND STALKING THE DEER
(with Lionel Edwards)

A HIGHLAND GATHERING

A STUART SKETCH BOOK



THE BARN: SOUTH END.

Frontispiece

BIG GAME

WANDERINGS IN MANY LANDS

by

H. FRANK WALLACE

"Records they're not—at least in one sense, no;
But in another, yes—
Records and annals of the long ago
And much rare happiness."

TROPHIES : HILTON BROWN.

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TO MY WIFE

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FOREWORD

I WAS once told by the assistant of a palmist in America that my hand bore strong resemblances to those of all the leading senators in the United States. So impressed was he that he implored me to endeavour to obtain an interview with "The Master." This gentleman, for a suitable fee, was able to announce that, though there might be some slight differences, in the main the affinities were remarkable. He advised me to adopt a political career. Gratified as I was at finding any point of similarity between the eminent persons whose names he enumerated and myself, I reluctantly came to the conclusion that the only tie by which we were connected was purely superficial. Though the monetary rewards which console legislators in this country for the loss of their time are not so great as those conceded across the Atlantic, visions of the superb yachts, the marble halls, the silver-fitted bathrooms amongst which, if we are to believe the films, a certain class of American statesmen live and move and have their being, flitted before my dazed imagination. Such dreams have not materialised ! Never having reached these heights of affluence, I console myself with the

thought that neither have I sunk to the depths with which, at times, they appear to alternate. Consequently I am unable to write the life-story of a hundred per cent. he-man who triumphs against fearful odds and unscrupulous rivals.

There is, however, something of interest in the lives of all of us, and I have tried to set down in the following pages some of the simpler things in which I have found interest and amusement and which have made my life a happy one.

When we are young everything is so new, so fresh, and so adventurous that the contagion of our own enthusiasm must, we feel, kindle a like enthusiasm in others. That is why in a first book, whatever it may lack, there is a something which only a skilled writer can hope subsequently to recapture. As we grow older doubts as to the truth of our conviction arise. We stand aghast at our own temerity, at the audacity which led us to suppose that our concerns could be of any possible interest to any but ourselves. Some, many of them unknown to me in person, have been kind enough to say that they have derived pleasure from previous efforts of mine. On them rests the responsibility for this book. The utmost that I can claim for it is that it covers a wide range.

Were I to endeavour to thank all those to whom I am indebted, directly and indirectly, for its compilation, the list would be an endless one. In particular, I am grateful to Lord Belper

for allowing me to sketch his New Zealand head and for much besides; to Captain Courtney for the photograph opposite page 244; to Miss Compton Collier for the beautiful photographs of my barn; and to Mr. J. B. Burlace of Rowland Wards, to Captain Keith Caldwell, M.C., and to my old friend Captain H. C. Brocklehurst, for help in the preparation of the final chapter.

Some of the material used has appeared in the form of articles. My thanks are due to the editors of the *Field* and *Country Life* for permission to make use of this.

H. FRANK WALLACE.

August, 1934.

BIG GAME

CHAPTER I • SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS AND NOTES ON COLLECTIONS OF BIG GAME

I USED to wonder, were I the industrious and long-headed young man who always came out on top in the fairy stories, what I should choose if the beautiful fairy suddenly appeared and gave me three wishes. Privately I considered the industrious and long-headed young man missed his chances when, two wishes having been granted, he did not put in a petition for an unlimited number with his third. I suppose the good fairy, pained and grieved, would have scored off him in some way if he had! A recent writer remarked that, had he gifts to bestow on a child starting life, he would, above all others, select an appreciation of beauty and a sense of humour. Of the possession of the first of these extremely dangerous qualities I have no doubt; I hope I may lay claim to the second.

Not being in the position of the industrious young man, for the choice of a third wish I am in doubt. A contented mind? Good health? An inexhaustible purse? I wonder! The last

is of no use, lacking the other two. I have never had very much money, though I once made a thousand pounds in a week through no personal acumen on my own part, but simply because I happened to own some shares in a company the control of which two rival sets of robbers were out to acquire. During this halcyon period, which was all too short, I used to buy the *Financial Times*, a very dull paper, I thought, and scan its columns, my brow knit with care, hoping I should be taken for a financial magnate. The rivals continued boosting my shares for some days, came to the conclusion they were being rather silly, and, much to my regret and that of the other shareholders, compromised. But it was a glorious week.

A great many of my wishes have been granted, which in a way makes it much more difficult.

When I was a boy I remember being asked what I wanted to do when I grew up. Inspired by a recollection of the fact that Sir Luke Fildes had once incautiously remarked in my hearing that my chin indicated artistic possibilities, I replied, " Paint and write books."

It may not be a very lofty ambition, but " to know what you prefer, instead of humbly saying ' Amen ' to what the world tells you you ought to prefer, is to have kept your soul alive."

In those days the stages through which a boy passed in the choice of a profession usually included those of a policeman, an engine-driver, a

soldier or a sailor. Now it is an airman or the driver of a racing car. I had passed through the earlier phases, and later was to find that defective eyesight was an insuperable bar to the latter professions. A land agent seemed a pretty good sort of life, though even then its glories were beginning to get a little dim. To my youthful imagination it meant riding about spacious acres on horseback, directing the activities of the sons of the soil, and having about three days' shooting a week. The horse part I did not regard as a necessity, scarcely knowing one end of this noble beast from the other; but the shooting sounded most attractive! To be any good as a land agent it appeared that examinations, always my bugbear, were essential. These successfully passed, the magic letters P.A.S.I. could be appended after one's name. Consequently, after a prolonged period of intensive study, I was herded with a number of other aspirants to Osterley Park. Bearing as we did complicated lengths of chain, painted wands, theodolites, and various other impedimenta, to my self-conscious imagination we resembled some peculiar form of travelling circus. It was a very wet day, and I was acutely miserable. We dragged the chains about all over the park shouting out numbers, planted the wands, and looked through the theodolites. The whole thing struck me as being rather comic and a great waste of time. I did not pass the examination.

This effort proving a failure, I read for the Bar. Years later, when stalking in Ross-shire, I met the late Sir Hugh Fraser, who had just been promoted to the Bench. He had been one of my examiners, and the awe with which he had then inspired me still lingered. To my intense surprise it appeared that he attached quite an exaggerated importance to my literary and artistic efforts, and went so far as to ask me to do some illustrations for his delightful book, "Amid the High Hills." It may have been due to his kindly tolerance that I was admitted as a barrister of the Inner Temple, but admitted I was.

Greater qualities than I possessed were, however, necessary for the career of a successful barrister. The training for the Bar provides an excellent education, and I have never regretted the time I spent over my law books. The man who becomes a judge, a Lord Chancellor, or a Minister of the Crown, acquires a position which the ordinary mortal, even though spurred by ambition, cannot hope to attain. I wonder sometimes if those who reach these glittering heights are really happier. Power, once tasted, is a potent drug: its loss is correspondingly acute.

The judge I have mentioned was talking of such things one day as we started for the hill. Suddenly he stopped and, looking at me rather sadly, remarked: "You know, Wallace, the time is so appallingly short!" So why not do what you want?

An ex-Home Secretary once told me that the most difficult fact to which he had to accustom himself when his party was turned out of office was his complete exclusion from affairs. A curtain descended abruptly, cutting him off from all over which he had held sway. The sense of despair he seemed to experience at his absolute elimination from all that he had formerly controlled struck me far more forcibly than the fact that he had controlled so much.

Again, a great pro-consul with whom I had been at school was turned out of his position by wire-pullers who did not agree with his strong policy. I was talking to him about it, and asked him if he was any happier than when I first knew him as one of the most prominent figures in school life. He smiled rather gloomily and said: " What's so awful is seeing one's life-work undone."

Ordinary mortals are, at least, spared such reflections.

Not long ago I attended a big public banquet. At the high table, as is customary at such functions, sat the big-wigs decked out with ribands and orders, who gazed with friendly condescension at the smaller fry. I was fortunate in being placed at the junction of the tables, and commanded a splendid view of the antics of the great. Before settling down to a very indifferent meal, press photographers got busy, and clicks and flashes were going on all over the

room. Suddenly behind me I heard a sibilant whisper: "We shall want a good pose from you, Sir Ernest." Just beyond me was sitting a gentleman very prominent in the artistic world. He, evidently trained to perfection in this sort of thing, immediately threw himself into the attitude of a performing seal, and assumed an ingratiating smile. There came from behind me a flash, a click, and a "Thank you, Sir Ernest," and he relaxed. I believe he saw the humour of it, for I caught his eye and he very nearly winked.

A lady remarked to me: "I can't make out why you men always give each other ribands and things for what, after all, is only doing your jobs properly. You're like a lot of children with toys." A point of view in which there is, perhaps, some truth.

Environment, no doubt, plays a great part in deciding a young man's future. The man who becomes an artist might have developed into an actor, a preacher, or an auctioneer. Just as it would be interesting to discover what kind of head a stag would grow under certain conditions of food and climate, so would it be curious to note how an individual would react to conditions entirely different from those under which he had developed. Unfortunately, as in the case of the stag, it is one of those things which we shall never know.

Perhaps I have not chosen so badly. It is true

that books on sport and travel do not bring in a great deal of money; pictures do not always sell. On the other hand, I have been my own master, which counts for a good deal; I have seen much of the world; I have met a number of charming and interesting people, many of whom have shown me great kindness; I have made a few real friends and several enemies—which does not keep me awake at night. I have been much in the open air and have learnt something of human nature. Last, and most important, I have a wonderful home and enjoy my work.

Painting and writing are not occupations I should recommend to any young man as a career, but, then, I have scarcely ever met anyone who unreservedly recommended the adoption of his own calling!

For all the worry, heart-burning, and anxiety which an artistic career involves, I feel more than repaid by some of the letters I receive. Often they come from young men who are strangers to me. There still do exist young men who take an interest in the things which were dear to the heart of an older generation, though, judging by photographs in the illustrated papers, such a fact might be open to doubt. The bulk of these seem to consist of pictures of semi-nude young creatures of both sexes posed on beaches or disporting themselves to the accompaniment of dyspeptic howls from flatulent negroes. Such pictures are, it is true, preferable to those of old

gentlemen in similar circumstances; for there is only one thing more repellent than a photograph of an old man with very little on, and that is one of an old lady! But there are no old ladies nowadays!

It was while I was reading for the Bar that my chance came. I was asked to go round the world. My father, quite rightly, said that I must first pass my final examination. I worked as I had never worked before. The anxiety with which I awaited the result is better imagined than described. At last the list appeared and my name was included. A week or so later I set out. It was two years before I returned.

For a young man it was a wonderful experience, and one which has coloured my whole life. Those who have never travelled have only one standard by which to measure their fortunes. To have seen strange countries and peoples, to have looked at things from the standpoint of others, to have mixed with all sorts and conditions of men, is to have gained knowledge which nothing else in the world can bestow.

I have always felt grateful to my father for allowing me to undertake a journey of the outcome of which he must have had grave doubts. Many parents, confronted with such a problem, would have unhesitatingly vetoed the project from the start, and my life might have been entirely different. If, now, every lass is no longer a queen, and some of the swans have developed

into geese, before the trees turned brown I was away round the world, and it was thanks to him whom many still remember with affection and love.

A predominating passion is a sure magnet attracting those with similar tastes. Men whose interests lie in travel, natural history, and big game shooting, whether with the rifle or camera, have an inexhaustible store-house on which to draw. They are always enthusiasts, and enthusiasm is not too common among the over-sophisticated. Travellers are usually simple-minded, and simplicity is the hall-mark of truth. No meetings of such a type can fail to provide a variety of subjects which it would be difficult to match in any company. The best kind of hunter, whatever his nationality, is not the brutalised savage depicted by the anti-sport brigade. He often, in fact usually, has a contemplative and poetic side to his character which, if he is an Englishman, he is at great pains to conceal. He rarely speaks of his own experiences, but will wax eloquent on those of another. His concomitant interests are surprising and varied. In an evening spent in such company you may learn not only how to grow rhododendrons, the history of the Church in Scotland, the birth of Icelandic poetry, or the exact method by which the early Egyptians embalmed mummies. You may also hear, to your considerable surprise, what the chief secre-

tary said on receiving the news of his appointment as governor; why Her Excellency refused to allow the new governess to accompany them; what steps were taken when the ex-monarch, presented with his bill, airily remarked, " Kings don't pay"; and a good many other stories which will not bear repetition.

I have always been glad that when I was a young man I conceived the idea of asking all the prominent hunters I knew personally to write their names on a page in my game book. A reproduction of this page appears opposite. Opportunities to secure the autographs of all I knew were lacking, but there can be but few places on the earth's surface which have not been visited at one time or another by those whose signatures are appended. Of these, some, among them my dearest friends, have already passed to the happy hunting grounds. Others still survive to enjoy, I hope, much good sport in the years to come.

One of the most interesting experiences which a knowledge of natural history brought me was a visit to the late Duc d'Orleans, a year or two before his untimely death. Mr. Burlace, the managing director of Rowland Wards, who has befriended so many hunters of big game, accompanied me to the Manoir d'Anjou, near Brussels, where the Duke's collection was housed. Our object was to tabulate and classify the enormous number of trophies which was



PLATE I.—A PAGE FROM MY GAME BOOK.

bequeathed to the French nation, and is now in Paris.

The Duke was a charming man, and lived for many years in England. Being heir to the French throne, he was not permitted by the Government to live in France, and made his home in Belgium. A great traveller and sportsman, he was in appearance not unlike his ancestor, King Henry of Navarre. In the library, a very valuable one, were cases containing the full insignia of the many orders and decorations bestowed on him. Some of these, such as the Order of the Holy Ghost, the Duke alone, so I was told, had the right to bestow. I had a sneaking hope that he would present me with one, but apparently they were reserved for crowned heads!

His English butler was very like W. H. Berry, the comedian, in appearance. When I returned to Belgium, after my preliminary visit, to complete the work I had begun and to make a series of drawings I had many long talks with him. A very capable man, he had rushed the Duke out of the front gates in 1914 as the Germans entered the grounds by the back. Returning, he remained throughout the war in the chateau, which was occupied as a German headquarters.

One German officer, he told me, beguiled the tedium by installing there a fair and frail lady friend. Her presence apparently irritated my

friend " 'Arree," as he was called by the staff, so off he went one day to Brussels without saying a word to anyone, and demanded an interview with the General in command. Ushered into the presence, he explained confidentially that he supposed it was quite all right; in these difficult times it was just as well to make sure, but the fact of the matter was that his temporary master had a young lady staying at the chateau whom he, 'Arree, was quite convinced was not his wife. All this with the most smug and priggish air of virtue. I could see him doing it. He was told the matter would be attended to, and dismissed.

Returning home, he quietly awaited events. Nor were they long in coming. While the lady that afternoon was solacing her loneliness with a little music on the piano, a car drove up to the door. An officer descended, and without waiting to be announced strode into the drawing-room. Within five minutes, not even being given time to pack, she was out of the house, in the car, and on her way to Brussels. That evening 'Arree encountered his temporary master in a towering rage.

" Some beggar's split on me !" he shouted.

'Arree, wearing his smug air of conscious virtue, expressed his sympathy. He was sympathetic again the next morning when the offender, rather bewildered at the rapidity of events, left for the front line.

" 'E talked perfec' English," remarked the

narrator dispassionately, as he finished the story.

The chief feature of the museum was the Arctic exhibit. Going through a small door in the corner of the huge room, you found yourself on board a replica of the yacht in which the Duke visited the Arctic. Mounting the bridge, you were surrounded by ice-floes on which were grouped representative specimens of many of the Arctic fauna and birds. This idea was afterwards carried out in a similar manner with groups of African animals. No description was allowed to be published during the lifetime of the Duke, but the whole collection can now be seen in Paris, and is well worth a visit by anyone who is in the French capital and has an hour to spare.

The only collection constructed on similar lines in this country is that owned by Major Powell Cotton, at Quex Park.

Before the war I wrote a series of articles on the best collections of big game. Generally speaking, in variety and excellence of specimens the private museums in this country are unsurpassed, though the collections of continental trophies which used to exist in Austria and elsewhere were superior. Some of the American collections are good, but they cannot compare with our own. Some so-called American sportsmen have unfortunately, especially in Africa, given their countrymen a bad name by in-

dulging in indiscriminate butchery. This results in the penalisation of the genuine hunter, and is particularly hard on the best type of American.

I spent a great deal of time and trouble over these articles. They were of value to sportsmen, containing as they did not only first-hand accounts from the owners of the manner in which they had secured their best trophies, but also careful measurements and photographs of the heads themselves. It is a great pity the series was not completed and produced in permanent form.

Nowadays it is the custom to belittle the achievements of such men. Big game hunting, especially in Africa, has degenerated into a series of society picnics undertaken by wealthy men and women with a craze for publicity. The qualities which inspired the earlier hunters were those which have given us our Empire.

Ever since the days of those early hunters—Nimrod, Tiglath Pileser, and others—men have been ready and willing to undergo hardships, discomforts, and great personal risk in order to gratify their love for the chase. This passion, so deeply implanted in the human heart, is no doubt a relic of the dim red dawn of man, when the unskilled hunter went supperless to bed. Tiglath—and he must have been a fine sportsman—no longer hunts whales in the Mediterranean. Poaching is put down with a strong hand. Carefully framed and efficient game laws

have done much to check the rapid decline of certain species, and though the quagga is extinct and the American bison non-existent from a sporting point of view, there are still fine trophies to be obtained by those who desire them.

It is curious that though we possess, as I have said, the finest collections of trophies in this country, the ordinary man in the street takes not the slightest interest in such matters. On the Continent it is different, and the annual exhibitions which were held up to 1914 always attracted large numbers of visitors. Displays of this kind, unless merely side-shows, are poorly attended here by the general public and do not pay their expenses. They are, too, costly and far from easy to arrange. I know, for I have done it. In 1913 I organised an exhibition of British deer heads under the auspices of *Country Life*. It was a great, though not a financial success. In the following year it was succeeded by an exhibition of African trophies. Arrangements had been made to follow these by shows of Asiatic, European, and American specimens, but the war put an end to the scheme.

Among the collections which I described was that of Major Cumberland, the first Englishman to undertake an expedition in pursuit of the great Asiatic sheep. He was followed a year or so later—in 1888, I fancy—by Mr. St. George Littledale. This delightful man was one of the limited few who ought to have written on sport.

Gifted with a keen sense of humour, great powers of observation, and a capacity for clear and lucid description, the only contributions to the literature of sport from his pen are the three chapters in the Badminton Library.

As a young man I sat next to him at one of the dinners of the Shikar Club. Rather awed by my proximity to the famous hunter, I timidly asked him to what locality his next trip was planned.

"To the cemetery, I expect," he answered abruptly; but the twinkle in his eye and the charming smile which accompanied his remark put me completely at my ease, and I spent a wonderful evening in his company. His next trip, I am glad to say, was not to the place specified, and he lived for many years, dying in 1930. May he rest in peace!

A very varied collection was that of Mr. P. B. Vander Byl, who with Lord Elphinstone and Major C. E. Radclyffe founded the Shikar Club. A handsome man, with his brown beard and blue eyes, he always reminded me of Sir Henry Curtis in "Allan Quatermain."

Actually the finest collection, so far as records go, was owned by Sir Edmund Loder. Though he had travelled all over the world and was a very fine shot, many of the best heads in his museum had been obtained by purchase or exchange. He was an enthusiastic gardener, and people came from great distances to see his plants

and private zoo at Leonardslee. A taste for gardening seems to run with that for hunting, and many big game shots take to it as they grow older.

Sir Robert Harvey had some fine heads at Langley Park, having shot in North America, India, the Sudan, Kenya, Siam, Burmah, Thibet, Newfoundland, Norway, and Austria, to name his principal hunting trips.

Mr. F. C. Selous's museum was probably that best known to the general public, for his fame as an African hunter was world-wide. It was presented after his death to the Natural History Museum by Mrs. Selous, and one cannot but regret that it was not housed and maintained intact, for to no other collection attaches the same interest.

Mr. J. G. Millais's collection was also well known to all sportsmen, but of this I have written fully in " A Highland Gathering."

Major Powell Cotton's splendid museum I have already mentioned. It is surpassed by few.

There are many others in different parts of England and Scotland, the very names of their owners being quite unknown to the majority of people.

It is curious, producing as we have so many famous hunters, that we have never brought forth a great painter of big game, one who would compare with the Germans Kuhnert and Friese. It is true that Joseph Wolf, perhaps the finest

animal painter who ever lived, spent his life in England and did all his best work here, but he too was a German. Artists in this country seem, for some obscure reason, to despise subjects dealing with natural history and wild life. I heard of one artist whose pictures, usually dealing with leopards, tigers, peacocks, and macaws in attractive colour compositions, are obviously "made up." A big, blundering, beef-eating big game hunter, who knew nothing about art, but liked pictures of animals, conceived the idea of getting this painter to accompany him as his guest on a trip in order that he might study wild nature on the spot instead of in the Zoological Gardens. The suggestion was ill-received. "Animal life does not interest me from that point of view" was the cold answer he got. Perhaps the non-existence of a great English animal painter is scarcely to be wondered at.

In these days it is no easy matter to house a collection of big game trophies, apart altogether from the expense incidental to securing them. The only place where they look well in a private house is in a large hall, if the owner is fortunate enough to possess one. They completely overpower small rooms and never show to advantage. A pathetic spectacle is the batchelor who has decorated the house with specimens of his prowess! He decides to add to them a final and supreme trophy, and asks some charming young female to marry him. She assents, and after the

honeymoon the first thing she does when she really gets going is to " scrap all that rubbish "! The visitor under the new régime, missing his old friends, tactlessly, perhaps, enquires as to their whereabouts. In reply, he is shown a poky little back room designated " Archie's den," in which his host sheepishly shows him a couple of heads of the smaller species of game which he has managed to secrete there. The bulk of the collection stare with glassy and dust-dimmed eyes at the walls of an outhouse or garage, where they slowly moulder into oblivion. The owner in his less sane moments may wonder if his final trophy outweighs the loss of the majority, and goes off for long walks by himself on spring evenings when " he has smelt wood smoke at twilight." It is then that his wife complains to her friends that " Archie is so difficult !" So, if you want to shoot big game, make quite sure first who you want to marry.

I may add that such was not my own experience !

" An' he pints wi' his pipe to the sophy,
Whaur his wife sits infusin' the tea;
An' he says: ' Yon's the bonniest trophy
That ever was won by McPhee !' "

If you want a thing very much and you get it, I have noticed that you very seldom get it in exactly the way you want. Fate or circumstance creates a snag. In the course of my life

I have managed to collect a large number of heads of various kinds. It is the custom nowadays rather to belittle their acquisition, and to label their owner a butcher. Though the desire to kill decreases with advancing years, there is very little that I regret in my hunting career. Had I been born in the present century I dare say that I should have been content to photograph wild game instead of killing it. The former is certainly a more difficult undertaking, and to obtain a good photograph of a record head a more desirable achievement than the head itself. Which brings me back to the workings of fate.

My heads for many years were widely scattered. Some, stored, I had not seen since I had got them. The larger mounted trophies found homes in Scotland, where I saw them at intervals. My modest dining-room in a London flat held a few skulls. To house the collection as a whole was one of my great desires, but the expense of building a room large enough to contain them was prohibitive, and it seemed unlikely that my ambition would ever be achieved. Then fate decreed that I should find a home in the Midlands. The house was delightful, part of it built before the days of Elizabeth, but the atmosphere of the Midlands is not conducive to the proper maintenance of trophies. That was the snag. In the garden was a tithe barn, built in 1664, 90 feet long and just under 20 wide.

A brick partition cut off a third of it, the floor was uneven, wooden boarding converted one end into a dark lumber-room, one corner held an obsolete electric light plant, another a carpenter's shop. Wide doors broke the walls, through which in the old days wains laden with corn found entrance. The windows were in the wrong places. The roof leaked, though the old original oak beams, as hard as steel, still lent dignity to the structure. It was an unpromising outlook, but my wife said: "This is the place for your heads."

The next step was the arrival of the representative of a big London firm. You could tell he was something very grand, because he was much better dressed than I and wore a diamond pin. I felt inclined to call him "sir," and he treated me like a well-meaning child. He inspected the barn. At first he was very suave, and brushed aside any question of expense as being something too crude to mention in the circles in which he moved. Then he warmed up, and his aitches began to fly. I did not feel so inclined to call him "sir." He mentioned a thousand pounds as a good basis on which to start the work of restoration. Seeing that he had overshot the mark, he pulled out a notebook and inscribed a series of hieroglyphics which he studied thoughtfully in silence. He then announced that he might be able to do it, without fireplaces, for £873 16s. 3d. The 16s. 3d.

sounded very convincing, and I began to see my visions of a restored barn fading away. Gauging my mental attitude, he dropped his deferential manner and adopted what I believe is known as a hectoring tone. He fancied he had got us! That was because he thought he was dealing with me. My objections he pooh-poohed, sweeping them aside with an air of grandeur which I secretly envied. It was then that he discovered that he was dealing, not with me, but with my wife. Women have much more courage than men. She turned on him, and in less than five minutes he was in his car and on the way back to London.

A local firm came and inspected the barn. They cleared it out, knocked down the brick partition, filled up the doors, repaired the walls, removed the carpenter's shop and the electric light plant, took off the roof, put on a new one fitted with skylights, installed two fireplaces, laid down a cement floor, and charged me about half the original figure. So much for the London representative!

They also introduced me to Frank. Frank was a professional football player until he dislocated his knee and took to carpentering. He weighs 13 st., and is as quick on his feet as a cat. Then the heads began to arrive. I have hung hundreds of heads and knew pretty well where each was to go, but even so it was no mean feat to have hung sixty-five in a day. Some of them



PLATE 2.—THE BARN: NORTH END.



PLATE 3.—CHINESE HEADS.

Roe Kansu Deer
Burhel Takin
Mongolian Gazelle Przewalskis Gazelle

were large, and the wall had to be plugged for each one. Without Frank it would have taken at least three days. He was the quickest worker I have ever seen.

The barn is divided into sections by oak posts which support the roof. This helped the arrangement of the heads considerably.

At the north end are the North American specimens. The two wapiti are very moderate compared with really good wapiti heads, such as were to be obtained fifty or sixty years ago. As trophies, secured twenty-five years later, they are not bad. Hung next to the head which, originally in the collection of Lord Powerscourt, is now in the late J. G. Millais's museum, they would show up very badly. This, however, is the finest wapiti head I have ever seen. There is a photograph of it in "The Gun at Home and Abroad." Below the wapiti are Rocky Mountain sheep, again moderate. I saw a much better one, and cut a tuft of hair from his neck at 250 yards ere he went bounding down the hill in a flurry of snow and was lost to me for ever! Next these are Rocky Mountain goats, prong-horn antelopes, and mule deer.

These goats are weird animals, and I could never make up my mind whether they were absolute idiots or extraordinarily well able to look after themselves. There are four, and after many days' stalking I got them all in one morning. The best, an old male, is quite good, but

unfortunately the smoky atmosphere is not improving their condition. After twenty years in Scotland they were as white as the day I got them. Now their skins are a dingy grey. The best mule deer is good, with sixteen points—nothing unusual, though the normal head carries ten. The record has thirty-seven. My best pronghorn is a nice head, though nothing great in the way of length. Over 15 inches is the record in this country, and mine is 12 inches. He is a most sporting little beast, and I shall never forget the dry sage-covered plains, the clear air, and my hunts with Yarnall. The old man must have passed to the happy hunting grounds, as he was no longer young when I first met him. How I loved his tales of the Wild West and his adventures as a boy!

On the east wall is a mixed collection: an Australian fallow deer, a descendant of some imported from England, two New Zealand red deer, a European lynx, a Russian wolf, a roe from Dorset, and a chamois. The best New Zealand stag is a fourteen-pointer. When I killed him in 1907 he was a nice second-class, typical South Island head with good shape and points, not to be compared with really first-class trophies such as were obtained by Lord Belper in 1925. With the present condition of deer in New Zealand I will deal in a later chapter.

The wolf and the lynx I got just before the war, while on a visit to friends in Russia. A

bear was my real quarry, but the weather conditions were unfavourable, and I never even saw one.

The chamois was killed in 1930, while on a visit to Austria.

Opposite, on the west wall, are my five best Scottish red deer heads. Only one is first-class, a beautiful and almost perfect royal. I got him at Wyvis in 1926. The other four, all royals, I should describe as nice second-class heads. They all measure about 32 inches in length, and unless it be something very exceptional, you cannot call a head first-class if it is much under 34 inches. These four, from Benula, Glenkingie, Dundreggan, and Glomach, apart from length, fail, when judged strictly, in some respect. The Benula head has a fork on one top and four on the other; that from Glenkingie is very massive, with first-class brows. The Dundreggan head was a wood stag, and I killed him almost on the march. His points are good but the span narrow. He was the first really good stag I ever killed. The head from Glomach is beautiful in shape, of the hoop type, but the third point on each top is very short, which spoils him.

Next this group are six heads, three of them royals shot by my wife. Nowadays it is nothing for a lady to stalk, but when she was a child it was very different, and the number of lady stalkers could be counted on the fingers of one hand. They did it for the love of the thing, and

not, as so many do now, because they think it is the smart thing to do.

Opposite these, on the east wall, is the only rare group of heads in the collection. They all came from China, with the exception of the chinkara gazelle and the blackbuck, which are Indian.

The Kansu stag hangs in the centre. Not so large as the wapiti, which come from the Tien Shan or America, he is none the less a very handsome beast. Intermediate in type between the wapiti and red deer, he has some of the characteristics of each species. On one side hangs the head of a golden takin, that strange Semitic-looking animal which lives in the highlands of Shensi in Central China. At the other is a burhel or blue sheep and a malformed roebuck, the only one I got. The Mongolian gazelle and Prezwalskis gazelle, both with the soft fur like hair these animals grow in the highlands of Asia, were killed in the Gobi Desert.

There are a few skulls of the takin and one of a Chinese domestic sheep, which I bought for sixpence (the only head I ever have bought!) from a Chinese butcher. Experts on sheep always get very excited over this skull, as it is the only known breed of sheep growing the horns at right angles to the axial line of the skull, with one exception. This is the Moldavian or Wallachian breed, which I believe is now extinct.

These heads are all I have to show for a

journey which occupied nearly a year, but they are all rare, and very few specimens of any of these species have been killed by English sportsmen.

The whole of the south end of the barn contains African heads, most of them killed in Kenya, or, as it then was, British East Africa, in 1908. There is nothing particularly worthy of note, and none of the heads are records, though all are good representative specimens of adult males.

My old friend Captain H. C. Brocklehurst was game warden in the Sudan for eight or nine years. Not a year passed when he did not say: "Why don't you come out?" At last I went. The group on the west wall is the result. There is a good buffalo, very good for the Sudan, with a span of 37 inches; a beautiful Defassa waterbuck; a good ariel or Soemmerings gazelle; a fair roan, reedbuck, and ibex from the Red Sea hills; poor tiang and oribi, though I might have got better if I had killed my limit; and last, but not least, what I really went for—a lion and a lioness. It is true that the lions in the Sudan have no manes, or very poor ones, but a lion is a lion, though he be as bald as a coot. It was one of the nicest trips I have ever done, and I enjoyed every moment of it.

Tucked away by the door is a fox's mask, of which I ought really to be very much ashamed. I was once at a crammer's, and the crammer

kept a pack of beagles. We were supposed to hunt hares, but our beagles would hunt anything that ran. This was what the fox did. So did the beagles, and so did we. Eventually he went to earth. One youth, more venturesome than intelligent, put his hand down the hole and got it nearly bitten off for his pains. Our quarry's mask should by rights, surrounded by whips, spurs, sporting prints, and an edition de luxe of Surtees, adorn the den of some member of the very exclusive hunt from which we poached him, though I doubt if the latter would have got so much fun out of him as we did.

Lots of people will say, "Oh, just a lot of old heads!" and let it go at that. It is quite a natural point of view; but to me what do they not represent! Memories which no money can buy; a few friendships which have stood the test of time; dawns and sunsets and the old chant of the sea; and perhaps, when I have come back from the hill for the last time, to a succeeding generation, Romance.

CHAPTER II • BIG GAME IN EUROPE AND CHAMOIS IN PARTICULAR

SUCH big game as still exists in Europe does so under conditions rather different from those which prevail in other parts of the world. There are few uncontrolled areas left where animals can wander unchecked, where the adventurous hunter can roam without coming up against existing and established rights. Every year the world grows smaller and the numbers of game decrease. Those which still survive are, for the most part, on privately owned property. The sportsman, therefore, unless he rents a shoot or is invited as a guest, has but little chance of securing the trophies he covets.

I do not intend to deal, except very generally, with such European game as I have not hunted myself, but a few brief notes may be of interest.

Elk still survive, though the head of the European variety is disappointing compared with those of the giants from the continent of North America. These provide one of the finest trophies for the hunter of large game.

Big stags are still to be got on the eastern borders of Europe and in the forests of Austria,

Hungary, and Germany. They suffered much in the war, and the conditions under which they now exist approximate more closely to the democratic state prevailing in other parts of Europe. Sport in Austria prior to 1914 was conducted on very much the same lines as in feudal times. In most places where the control of game laws is in the hands of the people, the game itself has but little likelihood of continued existence. The best chance it then has is when it is realised that in its preservation lies a probable source of income.

The European bison, if it still exists, cannot be far from the point of extinction. In the forest of Bielovitza in Lithuania the last specimens were preserved by the Tsar. In the seven years preceding the war they just held their own, and some still lingered in a wild state in the Caucasus, where they were much harried by poachers. Poaching, of course, on the Continent is a very different thing from what it is in this country. There the poacher is almost invariably a man who poaches from a love of sport and not as a financial proposition. They are always armed, as are the guardians of the game, and when they encounter each other they both shoot to kill. Many stories are told of homeric encounters which did not always end in a victory for the keeper.

Elk, reindeer, red deer, and roe owe their existence in Europe to sportsmen. Without their

protection, save in the most remote districts, they would have completely vanished. Bears and wolves are yet to be found, though the former, at any rate, are decreasing in numbers. Wolves in parts of Russia are still numerous, and a good many are killed annually in France. In England these animals survived until the reign of Henry VII., and in Scotland until the beginning of the last century. It is claimed that the last wolf in the latter country perished in Glen Urquhart, though there are as many pretensions to this honour as there are beds in which Queen Elizabeth slept, or caves in which Prince Charlie sought refuge.

The Alpine ibex or steinbok is on the point of extinction; that splendid little animal, the mouflon, is found in Sardinia, though destroyed, or nearly so, in Corsica; in the Pyrenees and on some of the high ranges of Central Spain, Andalusia, and Portugal, the Spanish ibex wanders in reduced numbers; the wild sheep of Cyprus is preserved in this island; whilst in the Caucasus and in some of the Ægean Islands the pasang, or wild goat, is rarely to be met with.

For me the horns of the cervidæ have always held a great fascination, in particular those of red deer and roe. I have never had the luck to hunt them where they attain their greatest splendour—in Hungary, Galicia, and the neighbourhood of the Danube. Even before the war

these giants were hard to get, and the visiting sportsman, unless favoured with an extraordinary amount of luck, stood a very moderate chance of securing a really big head. The season is approximately the same as that in Scotland, and the usual method of hunting was to approach a roar by " still hunting."

These big stags are very wary and difficult to approach, often taking up a position in some wooded basin round which the wind curls, and on ground where a stalk is often an impossibility. They scarcely ever show themselves, and may be known in the same limited area for several years without a shot being obtained. The best heads vary in length from 45 to 50 inches, though this is at times exceeded, the record being over 53 inches.

The only heads of red deer obtainable in British possessions to be compared with the best continental specimens are those which have developed from Scottish imported stock in New Zealand. From recent information it seems likely that such heads in the future will become extremely rare, if they are permitted to exist at all. I shall, however, deal with this point at greater length in a subsequent chapter.

In all probability some of the old continental heads which are said to be German came originally from Poland, just as many so-called record roe belong in reality to the much larger Asiatic race.

It is not necessary here to dwell on the roe. The best European horns vary but little in length, though they may in thickness. The best sportsmen on the Continent appreciate this splendid little animal at his true worth, and would no more dream of shooting one with a shot-gun than would a follower of the Quorn so assassinate a fox.

The finest European roe heads, taken all round, at present come from South Sweden, where they are carefully preserved.

Fallow deer are found in many parts of Europe, but probably the best examples are not superior to British heads from Petworth or Drummond Hill. They are usually, as in this country, kept in enclosed parks, vast in size though these may be. No great interest can attach to the pursuit of a wild animal under such conditions, though the fallow deer in a wild state is extremely capable of looking after his own safety.

Shootings can still be rented on the Continent at very much cheaper rates than prevail in Scotland. The rent of these is usually based on a graduated scale. A big stag with over twelve points will cost £40, a smaller one £30, and so on. A miss will cost so much, a wounded beast a higher sum. These prices vary with the locality, and a really big stag in some places may cost £100. They are advertised every year in some of the sporting papers. The intending

lessee should, however, make careful enquiries about the ground he intends to occupy, or he may find that it does not altogether come up to his expectations.

In many places wild boars are plentiful, though they are not any too popular with agriculturalists, as they do a great deal of damage. I shall refer to these animals later.

The chamois probably provides about the best sport to be found in Europe today. The pursuit of this fine little beast entails great exertion, a cool head, and good marksmanship on the part of his pursuer. The ground on which he lives is steep and difficult, becoming really dangerous in wet weather. To enjoy chamois stalking one should be young, in good condition, and accustomed to the sport.

I had always wanted to kill a chamois. His horns are not very imposing. They are small, there is very little difference to the uninitiated eye between a moderate and a good head, and he is not a rare animal. Yet there clings about him, as there clings to every animal whose pursuit is difficult and whose home is among the high peaks, a savour of romance. The sight of a chamois head always brings to my mind the scent of fir woods, the feel of pine needles slipping beneath my feet, the roar of mountain burns, and recollections of the fresh clarity of early dawns.

The slow process of the actual materialisation

of one's dreams never fails to strike me with a sense of wonder.

I never for one moment dreamt that the "Lonely Lady," for so we dubbed her, who daily walked along the Nile bank would lead me to my chamois. Being of a shy disposition, I never ventured to address her. Her tall, erect figure passed each evening through the hotel lounge without a head-turn or a gesture to show that she was aware of the existence of other mortals. Slowly she would pace out of sight, while we speculated as to who she might be. That she was a foreigner was obvious. Obvious, too, that she was "hochgeboren." Whether she could talk English or not was uncertain, for she never addressed a word to anyone. The hotel proprietor said she was Hungarian. Though she looked so lonely, though I had always wanted to meet a Hungarian as well as shoot a chamois, to advance and address her in English and to be ignored or answered in a foreign tongue was more than I could face. Several times I was on the point of screwing up my courage, but when it came to the point and that tall, aloof figure appeared, I collapsed. Then I really did collapse with an attack of dysentery, and Charles, the debonair Charles, who visited me daily, stepped into the breach. He reported that she was charming, that she spoke English, and that she had made enquiries as to my health. Dysentery is an unpleasant complaint, but if it had not

been for that, I told Charles, he would have been snubbed. Then my wife joined me in Khartoum, and presently we left for Luxor. On the platform was the " Lonely Lady," lonely no longer, for accompanying her was her husband. She came up and spoke to us, and we discovered that we were travelling home on the same boat. It was an Italian boat, and I very soon discovered that her husband was one of the best " raggers " I had met for some time.

At Naples we visited a small restaurant where an Italian football team, decked with large rosettes, were partaking of a meal. It was quite obvious that, as foreigners, we aroused a certain amount of interest. Every head was turned in our direction. The husband of the " Lonely Lady " grasped the situation in a second. He marched in, stood stock still, and flung up his hand in the Fascist salute. There was a roar of applause, under cover of which we slunk to our table. It was a most uncomfortable meal, as enthusiastic members of the football team would keep jumping up and drinking our healths. To these cordial gestures we could do no less than respond. They finished their meal before us, stood in a line, saluted, and walked out, full of smiles and friendly hand-wavings. I am, perhaps, complacent in supposing that such incidents cement a feeling of international goodwill.

We left the " Lonely Lady " in Naples with her husband, but not before we had received

a cordial invitation to visit them in Switzerland that autumn.

It was late August when we met again.

After the gloom of the Midlands it was very pleasant to sit on a sun-bathed terrace looking across the fields to where the Rhine slid past the towers of Gottlieben, dreaming, bowered in trees of past glories. Here you may see in one of the towers the wooden cage which held John Huss for six long, weary weeks before he went to his death at the stake five hundred years ago. Beyond the chateau, on the south bank, is the house which Eugene Beauharnais built and in which Queen Hortense lived long after her great stepfather had ended his stormy life on that bare rock so far away in the Atlantic.

Very pleasant it was, too, to stroll through the woods when the evening shadows lay far athwart the lush green meadows. It was then that the roe showed red and clear in the sunlight, and here I have seen so many as ten together, and more than twenty in an evening. It would be possible to develop really first-class roe stalking in this part of Switzerland. Under the existing laws, however, by which the shooting is put up to auction every few years, it would be very difficult to arrange and a very expensive proceeding. Anything more infuriating than to own ground of this nature and to be compelled to listen to the local butcher and his syndicate of fellow "sportsmen," warmed with wine,

slaughtering the poor little deer with shot-guns I cannot imagine. My poor host suffered tortures, and I am quite sure that in his place I could not have stood it.

Golden was the weather, and those are days which I shall never forget. Not least the voyage down the lake in the little white steamer, past smiling country dotted with cheerful red-roofed houses gay with flowers, spired churches, and old grey castle walls. At times I fancied that I was back in the old days on Loch Ness. There was the same important clanging of bells as we arrived at a pier, the same mild, leisurely bustle, the same influx of "touries," only here each tourist, male or female, however strangely, to our eyes, garbed, was burdened with that most useful of all travelling contrivances, the rucksack.

At the far end of the lake rose mountains, blue and silver, towering into golden clouds which shredded about their tops.

From the steamer we changed into a little mountain train, which puffed importantly into each diminutive wayside station. Not that we minded the delays, for each was full of new charm: country women, soberly dressed in black, with flat black hats, typical black pleated skirts with a narrow blue line, and black aprons; men in leather shorts, with Tyrolean hats decorated with chamois beards—all of a type which, apart from dress, you might have seen years ago at any Highland railway station.

All mountain scenery has points of similarity, and comparisons, to a Scotsman, were inevitable. There were, of course, obvious differences, but many and pleasing likenesses, mainly among the people themselves. The tanned faces were the same; the gait was the same; the expressions were the same; and one bearded old gentleman might have walked, just as he stood, out of any of a hundred white-harled cottages which I have known all my life.

At the terminus, a village set in the heart of the hills, we left the train and embarked on a nine-mile motor drive. A clear blue mountain stream bore us company all the way, laughing, twisting, and winding below the road, here contracted in a narrow gorge, there swelling into a placid pool.

It was late in the evening when we arrived at the shooting lodge, and never did I feel on more familiar ground than when I saw, seated on a low knoll, armed with long sticks and glasses, three stalkers. They were spying for deer, as I have no doubt many a stalker was spying outside many a lodge in my own country. Deer, too, we saw. Young stags, all of them, but each must have weighed some 20 sts.

The dawn had not yet broken, when at 4.30 the following morning there came a knock at my door. It was still dark as we went up the glen. With me were Brugger, the head stalker, well known to many English sportsmen in the

past, and Hamerle, for whose beat we were bound. The former was a great character, and I much regretted the fact that I was unable to talk to him in his own language. The ex-Crown Prince of Germany had rented the forest for ten years or so before the war, and was very fond of the old man. He insisted that Brugger should visit him in Berlin, and after a good deal of persuasion the latter consented to go. During his stay his host sent him one night to the opera and gave him a box close to that in which was seated the Kaiser. Subsequently he asked him what he thought of the war lord.

" Oh," said the old stalker, " he looks healthy enough !" Which was certainly not the answer expected.

On the last day of his visit the Crown Prince said to him: " Well, Brugger, now tell me, which part of your visit have you enjoyed the most ?" To which without any hesitation he replied: " To be going back to the mountains."

I have met many Highland stalkers whose outlook on life and whose mentality were exactly on a par with this dear old Austrian. Nearly every Austrian I have encountered has been perfectly charming, and of them and of the little I saw of their beautiful country I cherish the most delightful memories.

Both these stalkers wore, stuck in the back of their green felt hats, the curving feather of a blackcock, Brugger's being fastened with a gilt

W surmounted by a crown, given him by the Crown Prince.

The road on which we travelled had been constructed by Russian prisoners of war, and a very good job they had made of it. I fancy the local inhabitants would have raised no objections if they had been kept where they were sufficiently long to have completed it. Beneath a white-walled, thin-spired church in the centre of a small mountain village it petered out into a narrow track. Up this we climbed. Cow-bells were beginning to tinkle and signs of life to become apparent as we rose higher.

It was a couple of hours from our start that I spied my first chamois, four in number, feeding unconcernedly above us, but they were females with kids. Past a small croft we followed the track, and then the two jaegers settled down for a spy. The place which claimed their attention was a rock-face stretching for half a mile and more beyond the river above which we lay. For fully half an hour they examined every corner of it, and then decided to advance. We crossed the river, and it was at this moment that the inhabitants of the croft decided to get busy. An active young thing of some forty summers, armed with the inevitable umbrella, suddenly skipped into view with a herd of cows. Not unduly incommoded by her activities, they proceeded leisurely on their way. Then two men with a drove of pigs made their appearance.

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Several youths with another large herd of cows came to life from behind the farm buildings. From whence they all materialised I have to this moment never been able to discover. We were nearly half-way to the rock-face by this time. The pigs grunted, the cows mooed, the bells tinkled (some of the bells are as big as a large cooking-pot, so they "tinkled" at a considerable distance), the lady waved her umbrella and yelled, the men yodelled, and in the middle of it all Brugger suddenly sat down. He sat down so suddenly that I knew something was up. It was. Almost immediately I saw two chamois about 400 yards off. One never really appreciates anything until one has lost it, but I did appreciate the bigger of those two chamois. They were both bucks, and good ones. I am not an expert on chamois, but I could tell that, and also that one was considerably better than the other. If the pigs had not at that particular moment grunted, the cows mooed, the lady yelled, and the men yodelled (there was a horse, too, which I had forgotten; it did not, it is true, make a noise, but galloped madly about and added to the general air of excitement!)—if, I say, all this had not taken place, I might possibly have got that buck; but I didn't. He was about a quarter of a mile away, and apparently flew up an absolutely perpendicular wall of rock. I fail to see how else he got there! I had my glass on him. At one moment he was



PLATE 4.—SPYING FOR CHAMOIS: AUSTRIA.

at the bottom, the next, with a slight momentary hitch in the middle, he was at the top. There he stayed for some minutes in a typical chamois attitude with all his feet bunched below him on a space the size of a threepenny-piece, while he surveyed the pigs grunting, etc., and I fancy we three, trying to make ourselves invisible in the middle distance.

It was very tantalising, and after some little time we tried to get in, failed, and saw the chamois mount steadily higher and higher until at last we lost sight of them. After a long climb of an hour and a half Hamerle, who was leading, jumped them again, and though the good buck stood for a second at 180 yards I did not have a chance to fire.

Inability to talk the language of one's hunter is the greatest drawback with which the stalker in strange country has to contend, and though during this particular incident the result, had I spoken German, would probably have been the same, I was at a great disadvantage throughout the day.

Later on we found a herd of about thirty chamois, and with them a buck, but carrying nothing like as good a head as the one I had first seen. When confronted with a herd of animals, the females of which all carry horns varying only very slightly from those of the males, it is extremely difficult to pick out the latter. Moving across a snowfield at a range of 300 yards

I at last made out the buck, and in a very cramped and uncomfortable position not unnaturally missed him.

In September the best bucks are always alone, or with another male. They do not join the females until November, which is the best time to stalk them, as they then carry the much-prized "gemse bard," or beard. This consists of the long white-tipped hairs growing along the spinal ridge. For a really good specimen large sums are paid, £8 or £9 being nothing unusual.

Chamois are much blacker in winter than in summer, when they appear to be a yellowish-grey, which against certain backgrounds looks almost red. The horns of the bucks are stronger and more "pinched" at the curve than are those of the females, though the latter attain greater length at times.

The continental method of measuring, I may say, is to add three times the greatest beam at the base of the horn to the length of horn in a straight line, plus the length on the curve, plus half the width between the two horns from centre to centre at the top.

The walking is extremely hard at times, for the steep grassy slopes offer but little foothold, the danger being much greater after rain. Muddy patches on the hillside are very difficult to negotiate, but the worst going of all is on steep, loose shale, which slides beneath one's tread, and on which it is impossible to hold firm

even with the aid of a stout Alpine stock. A slip is nothing when stalking in Scotland, though it is as easy to break your neck mountaineering there as in Switzerland, if you want to; but when a slip involves a fall and a slither down a steep face, which may or may not end in a sheer drop of several thousand feet, great care and a cool head are required. The ordinary brogues one wears when shooting in Scotland are useless, and strong boots, well studded with proper Alpine nails, are an absolute necessity. One's life may hang on them.

After my miss we had a long and tiring walk over steep, rocky country, rather of the type which one finds on the "tops" in Scotland. There was one really difficult bit of ground, very steep and covered with loose damp shale, which descended almost perpendicularly to a nasty drop. I was glad when we had passed it. At the foot a wide snow-ringed corrie opened out. Into its centre jutted a rugged bastion of steep rock with practically sheer sides. Round this the mist swirled, for the day had become overcast, and at times completely hid it. As it drove clear, clinging to its topmost crags, silhouetted against the wreathing vapour, we could see dim forms of the chamois we had moved. They were quite unapproachable, as were a dozen or so others which fed or lay on the steep slope of shale beyond this crag.

Over the edge of the corrie shot a waterfall,

dropping a thousand feet or more ere it reached the swiftly-flowing river below. Skirting its edge, we crossed the foot of the snowfield to where beyond a smaller corrie climbed steeply to a height of nearly 7,000 feet. It was then that I sympathised with those novices at stalking in Scotland who complain that they know not whither their stalker is leading them nor what are his plans. I was in a precisely similar predicament. I knew not to what heights we were going nor to what goal we were bound. The spirit was willing, but I must confess that the flesh was beginning to flag, and the last 100 yards of the climb tried me severely. It was when, close to the crest of the ridge, I saw Hamerle take off his rucksack and peer over the edge that hope began to revive. He made a remark to Brugger, and though I could not translate it, the tone of his voice made me realise that he meant that there was a buck somewhere close by. I crawled up the last few yards and looked over.

We hung on a spur looking sheer down into a narrow gully which cleft the side of the mountain as though with a knife. It was very rocky, and 3,000 feet below I could see the little church which we had passed so early that morning. As my eye began to focus its surroundings I made out a chamois feeding at the foot of a rocky cliff. Close to him lay another, almost red in colour against the rock, a well-

defined black line running down his back. He moved his head alertly, but never looked up. On the better of the two I could have dropped a stone, for he was directly beneath me. Feeling all the while as if it would fall out of my hand, I aimed the rifle. Seeing the motion, Hamerle signed to me to wait till he rose. Knowing that it was my last chance and that he would, clearly, rise before long, I waited. Five minutes later he got to his feet. I was not excited, but I missed ! I knew exactly what I had done, and aiming this time well below him, he fell.

A few minutes later the gully was a cauldron of mist in which it was impossible to distinguish anything. Hamerle gave me to understand that I was to go round the back of the corrie with Brugger whilst he retrieved my beast.

I still have the fir twig which he, on the crown of his hat, presented to me when we met two hours later by the roadside, the chamois slung on his back.

The ceremony of presenting the "bruch" used to be a matter of much greater formality than it is now. The fir twig was broken, not cut from the tree, and on the death of a stag or chamois a certain form of words was used on presenting it. Its object was to show those whom the sportsman met on his return that he had been successful, as they might see by a glance at his cap.

The following is the correct form of presentation and the appropriate reply:

ALTDEUTSCHER SPRUCH BEIM DARREICHEN DES BRUCHES.

" Vor meinem Herrn hin ich tritt
Mit Waidmansgruss und mit der Bitt',
Es hatein gerecht' Schuss gethan,
Drum soll er den Bruch auch nehmen an,
Und tragen wohl in Freude,
Dem edlen Wild zu Leide.
Braucht Eure gute Wehr'
Allzeit zu Gottes Ehr !"

ANTWORT DES HERRN.

" Hab Dank, mein lieber Jager frei,
Trag' alle Weil der Dinge drei:
Wehr' ohne Schart' und Fehl,
Gerarden Sinn ohne Hehl,
Treues Herz ohne Wank,
Habe Dank uberall, habe Dank."

In the event of a stag being killed, the successful sportsman, in addition to the " bruch," was presented with the two single teeth in the upper jaw, which were cut out by the keeper. These were made into pins or buttons.

A novice who had not previously killed a stag, unless he wished to be looked down upon by Austrian sportsmen, was well advised to submit to the ceremony of being " blooded." In Scotland the stalker usually dabs a spot of blood on each cheek. In Austria the performance was more elaborate. The party formed in front of the house where the stag was laid out. The successful stalker was then led up to the

spot in solemn procession accompanied by the keepers. He had to kneel down over the stag's body, and round him a ring was formed. He was then struck over the shoulder three times by the leading personage present, or by his hostess, who pronounced the following words: " Der Este Streich für Kaiser und Reich, Der Zweite Streich für Ritter und Knecht, Der Dritte Streich für Waidmannsrecht " (The first stroke for Emperor and Empire, the second stroke for Knight and Serf, the third stroke for the Sportsman's privilege). The novice was thus made free of the forest.

Another rite to which great importance was attached was the gralloch. This, as everyone who has stalked deer in Scotland knows, can be made quite revolting. To see it cleanly and expeditiously performed is one thing, to watch an inexperienced ghillie attack a dead beast as if he meant to tear it asunder by main brute strength is another. A Scottish stalker or ghillie always takes off his coat. A self-respecting Austrian jaeger would never do so. One such, asked the reason for this, replied: " That would be very unsportsmanlike. I am not a butcher; butchers do that !"

A properly executed gralloch on the Continent should not leave a spot of blood on the coat-sleeves. To have performed it with such consequences is considered the clumsy act of a bungler.

I still hear Hamerle's voice saying, "Waidmannsheil," as he presented me with the "bruch." I hear other voices saying it, too, for it came to my ears many times during my short stay in the mountains of Austria. To these voices, which, alas! I hear only in my dreams, I answer, as I should, "Waidmannsdanks," and though now I am far away, I hope perhaps that they will hear.

CHAPTER III • BELGIAN DEER AND BOAR HUNTING

IN 1932 I was asked to act as the British judge at an Exhibition of Sporting Trophies which was being held on the Continent. There is a fellowship of sport which overcomes the difficulties created by the Tower of Babel, and my intercourse with foreign sportsmen during the progress of the exhibition was pleasant and friendly. The exhibits included a large number of red and roe-deer heads from Belgium. To those who, like myself, had not hitherto regarded Belgium as a sporting country, these came in the nature of a surprise, many of the roe in particular showing very high quality.

The judging itself was not easy, the other three judges and myself not holding precisely similar views on the points to be awarded for each characteristic. Length and thickness seem the greatest attributes a head can possess to Continental sportsmen, and though no head can be first-class without these qualities, a finely-formed symmetrical head with long, even points

should, in my opinion, take precedence over a longer and badly-formed trophy with short and ugly points. It is noteworthy in this connection that both the late H. J. Elwes and Johnnie Millais considered that in the great Vienna Show of 1910 not nearly enough value was given to beauty and the symmetry of heads when they were being judged.

Unfortunately no catalogue nor measurements were published, and the photographs of the best heads which were promised never materialised. Consequently I have to rely largely on memory for their details. Certain charges, too, in connection with the loan and freight of some of the British exhibits were left for me to pay. These expenses had been guaranteed by the secretary of the exhibition prior to my consenting to act as judge, and failure to make good these charges has marred the recollection of an otherwise pleasant experience.

A large number of the thousand roe heads exhibited, it may be admitted at once, might very well not have been shown at all. In an exhibition of this sort it is far better to concentrate on the best heads from each individual collection. Numbers are of no value save as an indication of the energy of the stalker, and the observer derives no benefit from the spectacle of a large number of mediocre skulls and horns. The display of all the heads from the collection of an individual has one advantage. It is possible

to tell whether the sportsman is " out for blood " or whether he has stalked and picked old bucks in preference to indiscriminate massacre. To the credit of exhibitors it may be stated at once that by far the greater proportion of heads shown were those of old bucks. Very few mounted heads were shown, continental sportsmen, as a rule, preferring only the skull and horns. Generally speaking, compared with British roe, those from Belgium are heavier, thicker, more roughly pearled, and, I think, longer, though the best heads from both countries would vary but slightly in this respect. On the other hand, the former, as a rule, are better shaped and more symmetrical. The same, again speaking generally, may be said of Belgian red deer. The Scottish heads exhibited could not compare in beam with the Belgian, but in shape they were much more graceful and with greater span. The Belgian heads, as a rule, were narrow, owing probably to the nature of their habitat, thick, but with a greater average of points. The skulls are slightly larger than those of Scottish stags and the weight greater. The majority of Belgian red deer and roe come from the Ardennes, about 2,500 roe and 400 to 500 stags being killed annually. Most of these are shot in drives, which seems a pity. At Jannee, the estate of Baron de Woot, about 180 roe are considered the right amount of stock for 500 hectares of wood (1 hectare = 2 acres). At

Waillet, the home of Baron Van der Stratan, the proportion is rather less. If the stock becomes too large for the acreage the roe become diseased. They are in bad condition when the winter starts, and fall a prey to a species of maggot, which infests the passages of the nose and throat and works its way to the brain. The only cure is to kill off about two-thirds of the stock.

The season for roe opens on November 1 and ends on January 1, bucks being shot to the end of the month. This seems an unnecessarily arbitrary arrangement, as the finest sport with roe is to be obtained by stalking. The season for buck should at any rate open on June 1 and end in November, by which time their horns are shed. Some of the best roe ground in the Ardennes and surrounding districts is held by private owners, but a large number of sporting properties are in the hands of syndicates, who only regard the roe as an animal to shoot in the drives which are held in the winter for wild boar. The bucks at this time of the year having in most cases shed their horns, many good heads are sacrificed to no purpose.

Syndicate shoots are leased for nine years. In some an arrangement is made by which a rifle is allowed to shoot two bucks by stalking, but as the majority are reserved for driving, this in practice means that if there are eighteen members of the syndicate (about the average

number), the individual only stalks two bucks during the whole of the lease.

During the war most of the best collections of roe heads were looted by the Germans and all the best heads taken, the horns in many instances being sawn off.

It is interesting to note in this connection that, so sure were the Germans of retaining the occupied territory, that they carefully picked out stags with bad heads and shot them, anticipating an improvement in the stock when they were subsequently free to take advantage of the sport.

Only one collection of roe heads in the exhibition was pre-war, and that contained a head (killed in 1863) unanimously held to be the best in the room. Collections acquired prior to the war may not have shown many heads better than those shot after 1918, but it would have been interesting to compare them.

Of those shown, it was decided to award marks to the six best heads in each individual collection, points being given for length, beam, shape, and pearling. The head which I have already mentioned was taken as the standard, with 20 marks. The length of this head was 10⅝ inches; round both coronets the measurement was 10¼ inches. The longest head shown measured 12 inches, and the widest 8¼ inches tip to tip.

The collection of Baron Hubert de Woot de Trixhe was awarded 98 marks; that of Baron

Jose Van der Stratan Waillet 97 marks. Personally I considered that the latter represented a better normal average than the former, but the 12-inch head to which I have already alluded gained Baron de Woot the extra mark.

The only other measurements of heads I have been able to trace are:

Length.	*Tip to Tip.*	*Round both Coronets.*	*Killed.*
10⅛	6¾	9½	1929
10⅛	5	9	—
9⅜	6	10¼	1931

The second of these heads was certainly the best-shaped head in the exhibition, and I awarded it the special prize allotted to each judge to dispose of as he wished. A remarkable head killed in 1933 at Dave had the following measurements: Length, 13½; beam, 3¾; brows, 4⅜; tops, 4¾; back points, 3⅜; round coronets, 11⅛. Horns straight, thick, and narrow. It was figured by me in the *Field*, February 3, 1934.

The following were the best red deer heads:

No.	*Points.*	*Length.*	*Beam.*	*Span.*	
1	6+5	39	8½	29	1st Prize
2	9+8	38	7¼	29	
3	7+7	35	6¼	24	17-inch brows. 2nd Prize
4	7+8	37¼	6¼	25	3rd Prize
5	5+5	37	5¾	29	
6	5+5	34	5	29	

I give here the method which is sometimes used on the Continent for judging stags' heads. It is known as the Nadler formula:

				Points.
Length:				
Left horn, *e.g.*	50	= 120.	Take half	= 60
Right horn, *e.g.*	70			
Left brow, *e.g.*	20	= 44.	Take quarter	= 11
Right brow, *e.g.*	24			
Left coronet, *e.g.*	24	= 48.	Take half	= 24
Right coronet, *e.g.*	24			
Beam:				
(*a*) The thinnest part, *e.g.*	14	= 48.	Take quarter	= 12
Between brow and tray, *e.g.*	12			
(*b*) Between tray and tops, *e.g.*	12			
On both horns, *e.g.*	10			

(*N.B.*—This is in lieu of weight.)

Number of points, exact, *e.g.*	16
Every pound of weight given 1 point, *e.g.*	15
Colour:	
Light	0
Brown	1
Black	2
Tops, judged from 1 to 4 points.	
Points:	
If polished, sharp, and white	1
If blunt and dull	0
Stags with:	
180–190 points	3rd class
190–200 „	2nd class
200 and over	1st class

This method of judging heads was employed at the International Hunting Exhibition at Leipzig in 1930. It was an attempt to record with a certain precision the relative merits of the different heads exhibited.

Previous to this, in February, 1929, an exhibition of trophies had been held at which Professor A. Dyk, Président de l'Union des Chasseurs Tchekoslovakaia, decided to create a basis of

measurements on new principles. The Nadler method was not then perfectly known, and in any case the employment of the original formula necessitates the inclusion of weights which it is not always possible to take in an exhibition of trophies of this kind.

M. Jacques Blanchard, a member of the Société Mammalogique et Ornithologique de France and of the Comité de Direction de la Société National d'Acclimatation de France, proposed another formula based on an average of measurements of the coronets, beams, and points. Beauty, colouration, pearling and defects were also taken into account.

I will not weary the reader with full details of these formulæ. They appeared in a report of the Conseil International de la Chasse presented at its third session in Warsaw, April, 1934, and published at the Secretariat Général du Conseil, 21, Rue de Clichy, Paris.

I have not had an opportunity of discussing these various formulæ with Continental sportsmen. It seems to me, however, that the method adopted many years ago in this country—in 1892 to be exact—and standardised by Messrs. Rowland Ward, is as good as any. For a translation of the reports which I have mentioned I am much indebted to Mr. L. B. Burlace, who has taken a great deal of trouble to render it correct. Even so I am left in a state of subdued mystification. I have always been

an atrocious mathematician, and this fact may be partly responsible for my sense of bewilderment. All such attempts at a standardised system of measurements, a very desirable outcome, have one ultimate aim in view—to enable the sportsman (for it is on his behalf that these learned men sit up all night with wet towels around their throbbing brows evolving formulæ) to estimate the value of his trophies in comparison with those of a rival.

To my mind every such attempt is bound to fail.

We take the greatest length of horn, we take the measurement of the beam between the brow and tray or between the bay and tray, we take the span, we take the spread, we take the number of points, the colour of the horns, their roughness and any other particulars we like. We put them all down on paper. We compare them with the measurements of some rival head, and where are we? Probably firmly fixed in our original opinion that our head is as good as, if not better than, the other!

We may scrutinise as closely as we can the data concerning any particular woman. We may put down her height, her weight, the length of her hands, the colour of her eyes, her hair, the sum total of her charms. The study of these will enable no student to name with any certainty, except that in the opinion of other students he will certainly be regarded as an

ignorant and self-opinionated fool, the most beautiful woman in the world.

Such measurements and such data do not and cannot take into account the infinitesimal curves, the subtle gradations of form, which compel us to say that one woman is more beautiful than another.

Similarly a list of measurements and weights fails to enable the sportsman to say with any certainty which is the better of two heads. One may be a little longer, the other a little thicker. One may have more points, the other may have tines which are longer and more finely shaped. Even at exhibitions of trophies the verdict of judges is seldom, save in very rare instances, unanimous, for each has his own standards, and some quality which may appeal to one is overshadowed by some other characteristic in the opinion of another.

It is well that this should be so. Imagine the chaos if there was but one standard of beauty for woman ! We may estimate from measurements and formulæ the class to which a head belongs, but unless we can actually see two or more heads hanging side by side, it is impossible to say which is the better. The final judgment is bound to rest on personal opinion, and there we may leave the matter.

During the course of the exhibition which has led to the above dissertation, I met two Belgian sportsmen, ardent roe-stalkers, whom I

will call T. and H. T. insisted that I should return to his home, which I very willingly did. It was slightly bewildering at first. A succession of young men, nearly all of whom were over 6 feet in height, alternated with a bevy of young ladies, varying in age from slightly over twenty to somewhere about seven, in greeting me. Never in my life did I so regret that I had not learned to speak French, though my regret was modified by the fact that they all spoke excellent English. They were my host's brothers and sisters, though, when meeting their mother, you would never have suspected it. Vying with each other as they did in making me feel at home, I recall these days as full of fun, laughter, and happiness. T. and I spent several early mornings after roe. The undergrowth was very thick and the food in the woods abundant. There was consequently very little inducement for the bucks to emerge from their thickets in search of food. I saw only two good ones, and these both eluded me. One evening I spent stalking with H. Just as it was getting dark we found a nice buck feeding in a ride. It was very hot, I was dripping with perspiration, my glasses were covered with steam, and I had a borrowed rifle! Creeping down the ride as far as I could, I had a shot, which, not altogether to my surprise, I missed.

My visit was followed by an invitation to return in November for the annual drives for

roe and wild boar. My wife accompanied me, and though on this occasion I did not get a boar, I was much interested in watching this, to me, new form of sport.

The procedure is as follows: The rifles, to the number of twenty or so, are lined in accordance with their numbers along a ride facing a wood. At each end of the wood are fifteen or twenty beaters. At a blast on a horn the two lines advance to meet in the middle, and continue their progress to the opposite end of the wood. This "combing" is an excellent method, for a beast that has squatted (I am speaking chiefly of roe) is almost always moved by the second line advancing. The beaters, who struck me as a cheery crowd, know their work well and keep an excellent line.

The shoots in Belgium at which I have been present as a guest have always been very well run and excellently organised. All the Belgian sportsmen I have met have been very careful, and in most cases good shots. It takes skill to hit a galloping roe crossing a ride, the majority of such shots being snaps after the animal has passed. The beaters get about 25 francs a day, with beer.

Boar roam about a great deal, and on this particular occasion we saw none. When moved they go in single file, and if the leader is killed the others go on. The average weight of a good boar in this part of Belgium on the fringe of

the Ardennes is about 80 kilos (roughly about 160 lbs.). The record at T.'s shoot is 186 kilos, and the record, as far as I know, for Belgium 210 kilos. A wounded boar is a tough animal to tackle, and inflicts a nasty wound with its sharp tusks. The sows bite. On a subsequent occasion one of the rifles wounded a boar, which charged him. He not unwisely ran away, when his hat fell off. This the boar charged, and amid a good deal of chaff he reappeared at the end of the beat with his hat covered with blood-stains. In three days' shooting we killed sixty-five roe, nine of the bucks carrying horns, one being a good head. I have seen a buck with horns, another which had just shed, and a third which had shed one horn, killed in the same drive. The first day resulted in thirty-one, the second in sixteen, and the third in eighteen. On the second day seventy-seven shots were fired, and on the third seventy-nine. This represents an average of between four and five shots per kill, which on the whole is not at all bad shooting. I consider an average of three shots to one stag in Scotland very fair, taking into account *every* shot fired. One may perhaps kill a succession of stags with one shot each, but a couple of wounded animals will lower your average alarmingly, and a good many of those shots in the neck "just to finish him off" are not included. Anyway, to shoot for an average is a bad system.

A great deal depends, of course, on the ammu-

nition. Prior to 1914 with copper-tipped, pointed bullets, using a ·275 Rigby Mauser, my average of shots to stags was very much better than now, when reliable copper-tipped bullets seem unprocurable and gunmakers recommend soft-nosed bullets. With the pointed bullet I seldom had to fire twice at a stag. A beast, when hit, seemed anchored to the spot, all his nerve centres were paralysed, and he was unable to move. My experience with the soft-nosed bullet is that, though hit apparently in the right place, a beast will carry on for a considerable distance. On more than one occasion I have put three bullets within a few inches of each other before the stag dropped, and on going up to him found that the first shot was all that was really necessary.

Shooting at a stationary stag is very different to firing at a galloping roe. A magazine rifle, too, is unsuitable, and a double-barrelled weapon almost essential. I used a double ·275, which Belgian sportsmen considered too heavy to handle, but a beautiful weapon. Many of them use an under-and-over rifle or a double rifle with a shot-gun underneath.

The following year I was again asked to shoot in Belgium, this time actually in the Ardennes at Orval, which Baron O'Otreppe has rented for many years. Long before the war I had corresponded with him on the subject of roe heads, and it was a great pleasure to discuss with

him our favourite sport. Hearing that I was staying with him, Baron Brugmann very kindly asked me to shoot at Mohimont, one of the best boar shoots in Belgium. At Orval on the first day we killed seven boars and seven roe; on the second day three boars and twenty-one roe; and at Mohimont, in the three days, nineteen boars, thirty-five roe, and four stags.

It was bright, frosty weather, bitterly cold, with snow in patches, and rising at 5.30 a.m. every morning was no joke. One wanted all the warm clothes one could get, and I was none too warm in two "woollies" and my Loden cape, those light, green Austrian shooting coats which are so good for this kind of work.

Many of the Belgian sportsmen wore brooches in their hats made of stags' teeth, or else the "stag of St. Hubert," which held in place the long hairs from the boar's back, similar to those taken from chamois.

At the meeting-place the first thing the sportsmen do is to form a circle. The host stands in the middle, and pointing at one of the guns asks a guest, who has turned his back, to name a number. The host then numbers backwards to one, and starts again, completing the circle. The guest retains his number for the two or three days of the shoot. Both at Orval and Mohimont I drew number thirteen, usually considered lucky. It was not so in my case. The rifles on each side of me killed good boars with fine heads.

At T.'s shoot in the same week I drew number twelve; H. drew thirteen and killed three boars in one drive.

It is interesting, when taking part in a new kind of sport, to analyse the elements of success. The wind, for instance, which blew from the north-east, not only chilled one, but rendered it much more difficult to hear the approach of game. The relief when it fell ! I also found it much more of a strain being stationed close up against thick cover than in a comparatively open space.

The country was very varied. Thick fir plantations in one drive would give place to a ridge covered with oaks; again, broom and oak scrub —a great favourite with boars—would alternate with large pines or beeches. Much of it at times reminded me of the woods in which I had loved to stalk roe at Milton in Dorsetshire.

The stands for each rifle were often marked with red and white circles painted on trees, with other marks to indicate where it was unsafe to shoot. At some shoots the keepers are very smartly dressed in green or grey, the head keeper being distinguished by a badge. Either he or the under-keeper comes armed with a plan of the shoot and places the rifles, telling them where to assemble after the drive is over. Though not to be compared with stalking, this moving of game is interesting and exciting. The braying of the horn indicates the position of the beaters,

which changes to a sharp toot ! toot ! toot ! if a boar is seen. Dogs are often used, and their shrill yapping shows the direction in which the boar is heading. It may go right outside the beat, circle round, and re-enter from behind the rifles. On the dead leaves of the frozen ground the dainty little feet of the roe patter, stop, and as you peer into the shadows to distinguish their grey forms, which blend so exactly with the background, there will come a sudden rush, and almost before you have time to get your rifle to your shoulder they have crossed the ride and crashed into the thicket beyond. To make up your mind exactly where you are going to shoot is essential, and a larger foresight than one usually adopts when stalking is an advantage. It is more easily picked up. If you do not make up your mind as to the exact spot at which you are going to take your shot you are likely, in swinging, to shoot down a young fir tree. I have seen this done more than once.

On December 6 I saw a big buck with newly-grown horns showing well above the brow. It was shot by Baron O'Otreppe, who told me he had seen a buck which had not shed on February 18. In entirely new country and in a new form of sport one has much to learn. I, for instance, did not know whether the position I occupied in any drive was a good one or not. Many of my fellow guests did, and would tell me so. Their politeness, courtesy, and kindness to a stranger

have left me with many pleasant memories. At one drive, just before lunch I was posted halfway down a steep hillside with a fir wood on my right, a scrub-covered hill before me, a steeply rising bank behind, with two rides cut through the fringe of low firs adjoining it.

"This is a good stand; you will be lucky," I heard, and took my place. T. I could see on the top of the hill above me. The other rifles walked on to their positions, a horn blew, and everything became still. Far off I heard a jay. They often follow boars, and also stags, as they move before the beaters. It is always wise to keep an eye on their movements. This bird I could not see, for it was beyond the ridge. I strained my ears, for I thought I heard a faint sound, but it was only snow falling off the branches with a soft thud. The jay screamed again. Far away at the end of the line I heard two shots, then a third; after that silence. I glanced up the hill and saw T. suddenly galvanised into activity. He stood peering before him, suddenly swung around and fired. From somewhere beyond him came three more shots. Silence again. I was certain I heard a sound, but could not locate it. It was not the snow falling, but something crisper and sharper. T. heard something, too, for he pointed. Then came a definite crunching. I lifted my rifle and glared at the firs before me to my right. It came again, and then quite definitely a grunt. I was going

to be lucky! Then pandemonium, or so it seemed to me. Pigs burst from the firs like a covey of partridges over a hedge. They tore, grunting and squealing, into the next strip of firs, and as they did so I grew cool, for I knew that they must cross the second ride. I picked what looked the biggest and fired. It held on and I fired again. Into the gloom of the firs they vanished, to reappear high up above me as I fumbled to reload. How, on this occasion, did I long for my stalking rifle! I could have easily fired again. Fumbling and harassed, at last I slipped the second cartridge into the breech while I kept my eye on the game. One pig, a big one, seemed to be going much more slowly than the others. It was stopping. It was sitting down. It gave a loud grunt and disappeared.

In the next ten minutes, till, in fact, three loud blasts on the horn indicated that the drive was over, T. derived a good deal of amusement from my antics. I knew the pig was there, but I could not see clearly on account of the undergrowth. I peered and stooped, sideways and forward, and not until I climbed up through the snow and the bushes did I find it. A fair-sized sow of about fifty kilos, neither big nor small, but at any rate I had killed my first wild boar.

A man may kill fifty or sixty boars before he gets a really good one. It is very largely a matter of luck, though knowledge of the habits of game will enable an experienced hunter to get a shot

where a novice would not. So many trifling details decide where the game may go, or whether you may get your chance. The wind, a movement, a sound, may bring luck or disappointment.

At one stand I had a large pine wood in front of me; round the corner at right angles on my left was Baron O'Otreppe. I saw and heard nothing until he fired three shots in succession. After the beat I went through the wood and found a very large boar had walked slowly out of the wood towards him. He had missed it, reloaded, and killed it behind him with his third shot. It might easily have come to me.

These, with the one I killed, were the only living pigs I saw, which was my chief disappointment, as an old full-grown boar must be a fine sight.

On private estates very good sport is had with wild boar during the late winter months. They are located in the woods in the morning and moved to two or three rifles. Great care has to be taken with regard to the wind and the method of driving employed. This varies with the nature of the ground. An old boar is nearly always alone, except during the rut, which is irregular. The young are born at any time, March and April being the most common. An old boar which has been disturbed may break anywhere from a wood. When the undergrowth is covered with snow they are very reluctant to

move, and often neither men nor dogs will shift them more than a hundred yards or so. The beaters sometimes have to seek safety in trees, and dogs are frequently killed.

The sows have one litter a year. A year-old sow rarely has more than two, three, or four young ones; an old one may have as many as twelve. The young, when three or four months old, lose their yellow stripes. An old boar becomes black with age, the tips of the hairs on the head and shoulders being grey. When caught young they are easily tamed, and I have heard of one that would run half a mile and swim across a pond 100 yards in width to reach his mistress. These tame ones are not safe with strangers.

Baron de Woot, a well-known Belgian shot, killed a very large boar which, when wounded, treed a man, stood on his hind-legs, and proceeded to bite his foot.

When fighting, I am told that they will stand up with their fore-legs touching and slash at each other with their tusks. Another Belgian I knew was knocked down in the snow by a boar which tried to bite his knee. It tore a hole in his knickerbockers before he managed to shoot it.

Though not to be compared with stalking, this form of sport was to me very novel and entertaining, and I look forward to the time when luck is with me, and a large and accommodating boar walks slowly out of a wood into a nice open space in front of my stand.

CHAPTER IV • A VISIT TO RUSSIA

IN those far-off days before our world was shattered in pieces, I was asked to shoot in Russia in the hope of getting a bear. Never having seen one of these animals in a wild state, I was keen to go, so my wife and I set out and eventually found ourselves in Petrograd.

Quite apart from shooting, there was much to see that was interesting. The wonderful collection of pictures at the Hermitage was, alone, worth a visit. Dating from the second half of the eighteenth century, it contained many priceless works of art. A number of these, I believe, have now been dispersed. At least forty examples of Rembrandt, including some of his finest paintings, were among them. I could have spent weeks looking at them.

Though not a beautiful city (Petrograd cannot compare with Moscow), the view across the Neva to the Fortress of Peter and Paul, with its thin spire rising against the sky, is one which no visitor can fail to remember.

To see new surroundings is always an interesting experience, and to have known Russia before 1914,

even casually, as we did, is one which can never be repeated. Many of the Russians—indeed, the majority of the aristocracy—were magnificent-looking men, and in their gay uniforms presented a splendid sight.

To gauge correctly internal conditions during a brief visit is difficult, more particularly if one is ignorant of the language, but the state of Russia immediately prior to the war could not fail to strike the most casual observer. In modern slang the upper classes "asked for it." They were charming to meet, but one thing impressed me very much. "Who is that?" I would ask, as some pretty and attractive woman drew my attention.

"Oh! she is So-and-so," would come the reply. "That's her husband over there, but she is engaged to the fair man she is talking to."

This sort of thing was quite common and was discussed without any attempt at concealment; an extraordinary arrangement whichever way it was regarded.

At a circus one evening we saw the poor little Tsarevitch with his faithful sailor in attendance. Mutterings of the coming storm, though it did not break in full force until three years later, were heard even then, and at times threw our host into deep depression.

Two years previously I had travelled across the great continent from east to west on my return from a hunting trip in China and passed

many nights in the homes of Russian peasants. The majority of those I met possessed the simplicity and charm of Scots country folk and treated the casual foreigner with a courtesy and kindness which has left me with many pleasant memories. What they could do for me they did, and hospitality can go no further. On this occasion my one anxiety was to travel as quickly as possible, and under such conditions existence was comparatively simple.

Life in Petrograd was much more complicated. It seemed to me that no one woke up until about midnight, and as I have no fondness for late hours one's ideas needed a little adjustment. Our host and hostess never appeared until lunch time, when we were rushed off sight-seeing, always a tiring performance. I remember the first morning well. I was making preparations to shave in a dressing-room which was not very well lit, there being only one small window. A slight noise behind me attracted my attention, and, turning, I was confronted by a gigantic figure in Cossack uniform with a large dagger slung diagonally across his waist. Bald as a coot, with long drooping black moustaches, he vaguely called to mind pictures of Genghis Khan and Asiatic freebooters. Fixing me with what appeared a menacing glare, he moved stealthily forward and seized my shaving-glass. He then planted himself firmly in the window, effectively blocking what little light there was. It took me

some minutes to realise that he was endeavouring to the best of his ability to assist my shave. Not without some difficulty did I eventually persuade him to leave.

One of the most interesting places we visited was Gatchina, where the Tsar kept his wolf and bear hounds, the latter gigantic animals. Here we met Prince Galitzin, the Master of the Hunt, a most charming old gentleman, who might easily have been mistaken for an English country squire of a type which is dying out. Talking perfect English, like all those of the best type fortunate enough to have been born in a high position, he was as simple and natural as one of his own keepers. A natural simplicity and freedom from pose are qualities too often lacking. In itself, the acquisition of money seems to destroy the very qualities which are most to be envied in those who have inherited it. Possibly those who have made money, knowing how hard a job it is, value it more than those who have never felt its absence, and measure everything by a monetary standard which is entirely false. My own experience has been that those born in great positions are nearly always simple, natural, and unassertive.

The kennels at Gatchina were very well kept, the hounds well looked after and in excellent condition. Those used for bear were not unlike huge St. Bernard dogs. I have never seen hounds like them, and I fancy they were specially bred

for the purpose. Borzois are, of course, well known in this country. In Russia, in addition to the kennel maintained by the Tsar, was another famous hunting establishment at Pershino, in the province of Tula, belonging to the Grand Duke Nicholas. Originally designed for M. Lazarev, a banker well known in the days of Catherine the Great, the house was one of the few perfect examples of the handsome country seats which were at one time numerous. The estate was presented to him by the Empress in exchange for a wonderful diamond which up to the outbreak of the Revolution adorned the Tsar's crown.

Wolf-hunting, as carried on by the Grand Duke, was an exciting sport. The wolves were forced out of cover by hounds of the English foxhound type. Great care had to be taken in locating the wolf's lair without letting the animal know that he was the object of pursuit. It was necessary without giving any warning to enclose his retreat on all sides either by nets or a chain of beaters. This having been done, it was the object of the hounds to force him into the open. Many of the peasants were experienced in woodcraft, and by imitating the cry of a wolf at night-time at some little distance from their supposed locality could tell by the answer to their call not only the number of wolves, but their approximate ages.

The mounted hunters, each holding their

borzois in leash, and the borziatniki (huntsmen) having taken up their allotted stations, the hounds were loosed in the covert. An hour or more might pass before the wolf appeared. Time had to be given him, before unleashing the borzois, to get well into the open, so that he could not break back into the covert before the hounds could get up with him. When they succeeded in doing this their object was to seize the wolf by the throat and roll him over. While in this position, and held down by the hounds, the huntsmen would get astride of the recumbent body of the wolf and endeavour to force the " strunka " between his jaws. The " strunka" was a stout stick to which was attached a thong, by means of which the jaws could be firmly bound. A grown wolf not infrequently escaped; indeed, in twenty-five years the Pershino Hunt only took 56 as against over 600 yearlings. The borzois in pursuit of a wolf of this type suffered severely, as one snap from the jaws would rip open their sides. The Grand Duke used to improve the pace and mettle of the borzois by running them against English greyhounds. The latter animals at times have been known to attack a full-grown wolf, a great tribute to their courage.

Hares and foxes were also coursed, though this form of sport was not nearly so exciting as the pursuit of wolves.

Another favourite sport in Russia was caper-

cailzie stalking, though we could not indulge in it, as it did not start until April. The Tsar was particularly fond of it. Known as the *tok*, this term was applicable both to the sound made by the cock bird when uttering his spring love-call and to the place where the birds assembled. They come back every spring to call almost from the same tree.

The sport required great patience, as the slightest sound made by the hunter, save during the few seconds when the concluding notes of the call change to a hissing sound, was sufficient to give him away. During those few seconds the bird is entirely deaf.

Blackcock were shot in a rather similar manner on their spring tournament grounds. Care had to be taken not to shoot the first bird to arrive, as he was the one whose call usually caused the others to assemble. Eight or ten was considered a good bag, while seven caper have been killed in a morning.

Interested as I was in hearing of these different forms of sport, news of bears was what I really wanted, and though bulletins with regard to them, to which I listened with ill-concealed eagerness, kept arriving, these were not of a sufficiently optimistic character to lure my host into the country. I began to think that we should never get there ! City life, starting at an hour when we should normally have sought our beds and lasting until the small hours, did

not agree with me, and grew slightly monotonous.

One incident I recall which amused us at the time. I became the innocent cause of an acrimonious correspondence in one of the English papers between no less a person than H. G. Wells and the late Walter Winans. The former needs no introduction. The latter's father had been the contractor for the St. Petersburg-Moscow railway. Having been born in Russia, he knew the country well, often revisiting it for the sake of sport. He was a magnificent shot with both rifle and revolver. Trotting matches were one of his hobbies, and in the last in which he took part he had just flashed past the winning-post when he fell back dead. There are worse ways of dying. A similar tragedy occurred at Fannich in Ross-shire, owned for many years by Mr. Vernon Watney. He had just killed a stag and was about to take the second. On this animal the stalker held his glass, when, hearing a deep sigh and surprised at the delay, he turned his head to glance at his master. To his surprise and horror he found that the latter was already dead. We pray in the Litany to be delivered from sudden death, but such passings as these seem to me merciful and not so dreadful for those who are thus released as for those suddenly separated from their loved ones.

This, however, is by the way. To return to Petrograd.

One morning shortly after our arrival the telephone bell rang and a voice enquired if " Mr. Vellice " was there. After a certain amount of argument the voice rang off. A few minutes later the bell again rang and another voice, female this time, asked if " the master was at home." Following a still more prolonged argument, she also rang off. Whilst we were discussing these mysterious calls a further ring at the front door heralded the advent of a very spick-and-span gentleman who wanted to know if he could have a chat with me. We chatted. His English was not very good and my French was worse. The talk turned on books. Had I ever written any? One or two. What were they about? Travel and shooting. This seemed to intrigue my visitor, and he began to press me. I answered as well as I could, though I had an uneasy suspicion that the conversation was not running quite so smoothly as he had anticipated. This I attributed to the confusion consequent to the erection of the Tower of Babel. Subsequently a friend sent me a bundle of newspaper cuttings from England. In one was a letter from Mr. Wells denying that he had been the subject of an interview in Petrograd. He never allowed himself to be interviewed. It had been Mr. Winans. Mr. Winans, it appeared, had been interviewed, but not in mistake for Mr. Wells, of whose books and tastes he knew nothing. This was followed by another rather acrimonious letter from

Mr. Wells accusing Mr. Winans of "unsportsmanlike repudiation." Mr. Winans countered that Mr. Wells could romance as he liked about planets, but that he did not allow any romancing about himself! At the time Bombardier Wells was in training for a fight with a gentleman called "Bandsman Blake." A correspondent of the paper facetiously suggested that it was the Bombardier who had been interviewed! Mr. de Schelking, my spick-and-span visitor, then stepped into the breach. He stated that he had interviewed me under the mistaken idea that he was interrogating Mr. Wells. I was pleased to find that while talking to me—"still young, virile, and tall in stature"—he had been much struck by my excessive modesty!

I have said that Walter Winans was a magnificent shot. I once watched him practising with a heavy revolver, and enquired if he did not find that his wrist got very tired. His answer was dramatic. Unfastening a large gold watch from his chain, and remarking, "I'll soon stop it getting tired!" he hung it just below the playing-card at which he was shooting. Stepping back, he then proceeded to obliterate the ace with a bullet, a performance which he repeated several times.

At length, after nearly a fortnight in Petrograd, it was decided that we should go to a place in the province of Vitebsk, owned by my host, and see if our presence would galvanise the bears into activity.

Bears usually lie up in November and remain in their winter quarters until March or April. While they are choosing their holes they are tracked by hunters, who locate the "den" by the absence of further tracks. In the event of the animal being found on land which was not held in private ownership, the hunter proceeded to sell his bear at so much per "pood" (32 lbs.), the price varying with the accessibility of the locality. In the old days the ordinary price was five or six roubles per pood (10s. or 12s.), but with the demand for this kind of sport and the consequent decrease in the number of bears the price increased to twelve or fifteen roubles, it being often stipulated that if the weight of the bear exceeded a certain figure the price rose in proportion. Thus an animal weighing, say, 200 lbs. might be sold at eight roubles per pood, but if it turned out to be much heavier when shot, the additional weight might be charged at twelve roubles per pood.

These hunters were up to all sorts of tricks and might sell the same animal to two different persons. If so, the bear was moved the night before the drive and the sportsman told that it had broken back through the beaters. He was mulcted of a sum agreed upon in the case of failure, the same bear "circled"—that is, tracked—again the next day, and a second sportsman allowed to kill him. Such consideration, however, did not apply to us, as we were shooting on

a private estate. On arriving at the place where we meant to hunt we were told that no bears had been located, and the factor suggested that in lieu of anything better we should try for lynx.

It is interesting to compare the estimation in which the same animal is held in different countries. In Roumania the lynx is classed as vermin ; in Hungary he is regarded as the premier game animal. Count Szechenyi, writing before the war, stated : " A sportsman has indeed to regard himself as extraordinarily lucky should he bag two or three in a lifetime—so difficult is he to obtain." In the last sentence lies the crux of the matter, for any animal that is difficult to obtain always holds a high place in the estimation of sportsmen. In parts of Austria the killing of an eagle with the rifle is looked on as the highest mark of sportsmanship.

In my brief acquaintance with the lynx I should think he must always be hard to secure. In a beat he often climbs up a tree and remains motionless until the beat has passed. They are savage brutes and will kill for the sake of killing. In Europe they prey on birds and small mammals, young roe being often taken. The tail is very short, the throat has a tuft of long hairs, the skin being a beautiful rufus fawn with spots. They usually stand about 16 to 18 inches at the shoulders, the long hairs descending from the tip of each ear giving the animal its characteristic appearance.

We heard that a lynx had been " ringed," and the following morning drove out in sleighs to the wood where the animal had been located. I was posted in an opening, though my range of vision was very limited, the ground and trees being covered with snow. Here and there were open spaces. Fallen trunks showed through their thin white covering, partially submerged wrecks of what they once had been. The deadening silence of winter enveloped the whole atmosphere, broken only by the cry of the distant beaters. Gradually these drew nearer, and I began to wonder, as one always does at such a time, if, after all, our efforts were to end in vain. Then from the tail of my eye I caught a flicker of movement. I saw nothing, but was conscious that a shadow had passed for a brief moment among the tree trunks and undergrowth. Motionless I waited, but nothing stirred, and I began to doubt the evidence of my sight, for the wood was noiseless as before. Then the shadow stirred again behind the interlacing branches. What it was I could not tell, but that there had been movement of some sort I was certain. Very slowly I turned. Suddenly, with the swift, apparent ease which nearly all wild animals possess, something large, silent, and ghost-like floated, rather than sprang, across a small opening behind me and landed on a fallen tree trunk. Automatically I swung towards it and fired. There was a flurry of snow and the shadow

vanished, but not before I had had time to fire a second shot. Something tore and ripped at the fallen snow and then lay still. When I reached the spot where it lay I found a fine female lynx quite dead. Very glad I was, for in but few private collections have I seen its counterpart. Every bear having apparently vacated this particular part of Russia, we decided to try elsewhere, and moved to another locality some distance away.

Here the news was no better and it appeared that, so far as bears were concerned, our journey had been in vain. The weather was glorious, which was some consolation, and to occupy the time my host instituted a hare drive. A long line was formed, about a dozen guns being interspersed between the beaters. We had a good deal of walking, but not much sport. Once a terrific outburst of yells and barking heralded the advent of game, though what it was I could not at first tell. Presently a solitary hare, hotly pursued by two or three mongrels, appeared in the distance. It was greeted with a volley by the nearest sportsmen, tore frantically down the line in a smother of snow, and finally vanished into the distance, unharmed, the mongrel pack still in pursuit.

Our visit was drawing to an end when, one evening, news was brought that some wolves had been seen. Enthusiasm revived, and next morning saw us setting out in sleighs for a distant wood.

Our hostess—may her shadow never grow less! —had armed herself with an automatic repeating shot-gun containing ten cartridges loaded with buckshot. I must confess that as we plodded through the snow in thick leather sheepskin coats, for it was very cold, I suffered many qualms. The owner of this dreadful weapon, which she resolutely refused to relinquish, plodded gamely on, stopping for breath at intervals, when the muzzle described an arc which seemed invariably to end at a point directly opposite and level with the middle of my body. I remonstrated in vain, so directly she stopped I manœuvred as quickly as the loose snow would allow for a position immediately behind her. She was a dear, but ought never to have been allowed to handle firearms!

Arrived at the rendezvous, we found about twenty convicts from the local jail assembled in charge of two warders armed with revolvers. They greeted us with smiles and, as soon as we were posted, trudged off to the far end of the wood, talking amicably to their keepers.

My hostess was at the end of the line of fire, my own position being next to her. I had a small screen of undergrowth and saplings in front of me and could see for 30 or 40 yards comparatively clearly. As before, not a sound broke the stillness, and I meditated on what would happen if the monstrous piece of artillery I had so far managed successfully to avoid should be

turned in my direction. Presently loud yells from the neighbourhood of the convict beaters announced that something was happening. Almost at once two large animals galloped past me in the direction of my hostess. I could not see clearly on account of the intervening stems, nor could I shoot, for they had passed too quickly.

Hardly had they gone when a terrific fusillade opened on my right. My feelings sank, for it seemed unlikely that any living thing could come unscathed through such a barrage. However, I was unduly pessimistic, for as the firing ceased a large wolf, looking very scared, appeared just opposite me, giving a splendid chance. He turned out to be a big male in full winter coat, and weighed just 100 lbs. Standing 31 inches at the shoulders, he measured 58 inches from his nose to the tip of his tail. The other escaped without giving any opportunity for a shot.

I was lucky to have got such an easy chance, for had the wolf not broken back, after having been turned at the end of the line, I should never have got him. Drives, at the best of times, are always full of uncertainty, as a very trifling incident may ruin them completely.

So ended our short visit to Russia. It is true that in its main object, bear, we had been unsuccessful, but success lies not altogether in accomplishment, but in what has been attempted. Our experiences had provided an interesting contrast to other forms of sport in which I had

taken part, and the bag, though small, a welcome addition to my collection. The European wolf and lynx are not rare, but specimens are not commonly found in private museums in this country. As I look at them hanging on my wall I confess to a feeling of sadness when I think of the fate which has overtaken so many of those whom I met during the course of our visit. Brutally murdered or forced to live in exile, their homes plundered and destroyed, the fate of many of those dear to them unknown, those who survive are fortunate if they possess a pittance of their former wealth or means to continue an existence which to some is almost insupportable.

In spite of that, I feel that I was lucky to have seen a phase of life which has passed for ever, and which none of those now living will ever see again.



PLATE 5.—THE HIGH TOPS: SCOTLAND.

CHAPTER V DEERSTALKING IN SCOTLAND, CHANGES WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE AND SOME STORIES

THIRTY-SEVEN years have elapsed since I killed my first stag, and I have been trying to number the changes which have taken place during that period. In the art of stalking itself there are none, for the necessity of procuring food goes back to the dim red dawn of man.

The greatest difference lies in the weapon. The spear was replaced by the bow; the bow by the firearm; this developed into the flintlock, and this again into the percussion cap. Then came the old black powder rifle with which I began my stalking career. Now we have the modern high-velocity small bore. Deadly in the hands of the expert, it is apt to encourage the novice or one who is not a real stalker into taking long shots, and the neglect of the art wherein lies the real pleasure of stalking.

Ill-used would the young man of the present day consider himself were he sent to the hills with the weapon which I carried in those days. Ill-used, too, he might consider himself if com-

pelled to catch " the mail " at six o'clock in the morning in order to reach his rendezvous with the stalker at the appointed hour. There were no motor-cars then, and had there been I should have forfeited the memory of that leisurely early morning drive, the mist rising from the still waters of the loch as the sun appeared above the eastern hills. The beautiful birch wood on whose fringe I killed my first stag is now laid waste.

Then we had a collie, an enthusiastic animal with a perpetual grin, whose duty it was to pursue any stag I might have the misfortune to wound and bring him to bay before he could gain the recesses of the wood. Fortunately his services were unnecessary. It is rare now to see a dog taken on the hill, though I do not know that their absence is due to any improvement in the shooting. That it should have improved can scarcely be questioned, for it is very much easier to make accurate shooting with a modern small bore, and at longer ranges, than it was with the old black powder rifles. That such weapons have increased the likelihood of wounding animals at excessive ranges is also true.

Thirty years ago there were very few lady stalkers. Now one can scarcely open the paper during the stalking season without seeing that Miss So-and-so has " grassed " a fine stag (I never quite realise the distinction involved!), or a snapshot, carefully posed, of some female

complete with the inevitable beret, labelled "Miss —— shooting at a deer."

Then, as now, every season produced the usual crop of letters on the "Deterioration of Scottish Deer." Then, as now, remedies were suggested and "Laudator temporis acti" explained how such deterioration could be remedied. Then, as now, those who had studied the subject knew quite well how improvements could be effected, and also that under existing conditions such improvements could never, generally, be carried into effect.

It seems to me, looking back, that heads are more intelligently analysed than they were when I was a boy. I never remember hearing much about measurements of heads. A head was "good" or "very good," and that was about all. There was, to my recollection, no real standard of comparison. That such a change should have come about is all to the good, and if stalkers would learn how to measure a head properly, instead of wildly guessing, as many of them still do, it would enable one who had not seen a particular trophy to estimate the category to which it belongs much more nearly and accurately than would otherwise be possible. A head described as "very fine" may be so for the ground from which it comes, and very mediocre from a forest a few miles away. Only today I read in a sporting paper: "The record stag for the past seventy years has been shot:

21 sts., clean, and a royal." This sort of statement may delight the casual reader, but to the experienced stalker it means nothing. It *may* be quite true, but many stags of 21 sts. have been killed in the past seventy years and a great many royals. If the writer of the paragraph had given the measurements of the head he might have been justified in his opening statement; as it stands it is quite valueless.

Thirty years ago we should not have been roused by the news that an American sportsman had suggested bringing his light aeroplane for the purpose of "spotting" the deer. There were few Americans in Scotland then (they are rare now as lessees of deer forests) and no aeroplanes. Nor should we have experienced a gratifying sensation on reading the comment in connection with the above statement that "the idea is frowned upon by British sportsmen"! The gentleman in question apparently finds stalking "a tiresome and laborious business which consumes much time." This being so, it seems rather a pity that he should have gone to the trouble of travelling several thousands of miles and paying a considerable sum of money for the purpose of indulging in a sport which bores him. His opinion may be typical of his age, though not of these islands; for I still hold that deer stalking is one of the finest sports in which one can take part.

A few months ago I was staying in one of the

most lovely forests on the west coast of Scotland. There I received a letter from a lifelong devotee of the sport, now in his seventy-sixth year. It ran as follows:

"I know you will be interested to hear I got the big stag I told you about in London, today. Until today I had never seen him in the four years I have been after him. Whenever I stalked the lot of stags he was with he was always hidden behind a rock or hummock, and when going away was always completely hidden. I began to think he was a myth! Major S. came here on March 14 last and saw him at the feed, and wrote to me he had a magnificent head of fourteen points and must have weighed 22 sts. then. Today he had gone back badly—only weighed 15 sts. and had twelve points. Tops magnificent. Horn very thick and long, but bez points poor, one of them not 3 inches. It is really a splendid wild head and I know you would like it immensely. Four years ago he had fourteen points, was shot off our ground, had his knee grazed by a bullet, and came home very lame. Three years ago he lost a point, due probably to the slight wound in the knee. Last year he had fourteen points again; this year only twelve. I hope this hasn't bored you, but I felt sure you would be interested to hear that a stag of this class could escape for four years."

Yet there are some people who say that stalking is easy, its difficulties exaggerated, and that

any fool can go out and kill stags with the same ease as he would kill sheep!

After reading this letter I went out into the garden. Suddenly round the corner of the house came a young gentleman attired in a kilt and deer-stalker cap complete. He had a very red face and very bright blue eyes. With the latter he gravely regarded me in a fixed and unwavering stare. His preliminary inspection proving apparently satisfactory, he advanced, a swashbuckling roll combining with the general air of a buccaneer.

I wondered what his first remark would be. Not long was I left in doubt. Glancing round with the mien of a conspirator, he breathed in a furtive wheeze:

" Do you like stag's blood ?"

Somewhat taken aback, I replied that I did.

" So do I," he announced confidentially. " I should like to have my breakfus', and dinner, and tea in the stag's larder."

This delectable spot apparently represented to him the summit of all earthly joys.

I should, perhaps, have stated that the young gentleman in question had attained the mature age of three when the above dialogue took place. I have already mentioned that my correspondent, whose letter I have quoted, was in his seventy-sixth year. Any sport which can combine in a mutual enthusiasm such disparity in

years must have in its very essence something unique and compelling.

Stalking is not what it was before the war. Forests which formerly were let on lease for two, three, four, and in some exceptional cases five thousand pounds, are lucky if they find tenants at prices ranging from seven or eight hundred to under two thousand per annum. The reasons are varied.

Young men, I am told, generally speaking, are not fond of stalking; they prefer grouse driving or some other less strenuous form of exercise. Those who are keen want good heads, and good heads are not easy to find. The value of any article is the price which it will fetch in the open market. The demand for good forests when stalking was popular was in excess of the supply. Forest owners benefited, and a deer forest was priced at a fictitious figure. Incidentally many good grouse moors were spoiled. Now that the supply is in excess of the demand, the unfortunate owner of ground solely devoted to deer suffers accordingly. Those who have money have in many cases no desire to stalk; while the keen stalker, who formerly could afford to pay highly for his favourite amusement, has no longer the wherewithal to pursue it. Before the war those who were interested in such matters knew who were the occupiers of practically every forest, many of these lease-holders for long terms. Now the majority of forests are stalked by different tenants every year, and the quality of the

stags, indifferent to start with, slips a little lower every season.

Scotland is visited by many more people than was the case thirty or forty years ago. The tourist itinerary was then confined to certain well-beaten tracks, such as the Caledonian Canal and the Trossachs. Here Messrs. Kamdene, Barnesburie and D'Alston disported themselves, or possibly took Tommiebeg.

When I was a boy the journey to Inverness and back was an event. It was nearly 50 miles. Relays of horses had to be arranged. For several days discussions took place as to who was to be permitted to go, and elaborate lists were drawn up in order that nothing might be forgotten. The road scarcely permitted the passing of "machines." Altogether the whole expedition was a thrilling affair. Tourists were never seen. They were all safely ensconced on Messrs. David MacBrayne's swift mail steamers.

The road now is changed beyond recognition. Buses even can pass each other with comparative ease. In place of the lovely birches which clothed the hillsides and gave the traveller so much joy to contemplate, ranks of firs grow in orderly rows. White-harled cottages stand where they did, though their gardens have diminished in size to add to the width of great arterial highways. On them, as of yore, you may meet the tinkers, who have not been transformed as have the scenes through which they journey.

Occasionally one finds that a cart has been replaced by a broken-down Ford car; but still through tousled hair weather-beaten faces, rude with health, peer as you pass; rabbit skins still dangle from the axles.

Places hitherto inaccessible are easily reached, and a type of visitor formerly unknown is to be seen in the main centres. Foreigners, smitten with the charm of the country, even take up permanent residence there, and having practised assiduously before a looking-glass, proudly display their nether extremities in kilts of their own design. I have often wondered, were they to select some of the more remote Pacific Islands as a place of residence, would they appear in the local equivalent of a fig-leaf; or in, say, the Austrian Tyrol be found yodelling upon the hillside in leather shorts and jaeger hats? Their females in the tweediest of tweeds open bazaars, and for a time, to the delight of the local inhabitants, enact the rôle of lady bountiful. The wealthier of them may bring money into the country, but they always remain aliens, and do not as a rule like deer stalking. When, involuntarily, one compares them with their penniless predecessors, one cannot but feel a pang, for the latter were at any rate sportsmen.

The hiker is another difficulty. I am all in favour of hiking. With their aims the average stalker has every sympathy, though the feeling

attributes—I think rightly—the decline which has taken place in the popularity of deer stalking as a sport. Not altogether, but to some extent. The type of stalker has changed. In " Hunting and Stalking the Deer " I wrote of some of the differences which had struck me.

The other day, when I was in Inverness, a lady came into the hotel lounge where I was sitting. We had met before, and I knew the forest which she owned. We fell into conversation, and presently she introduced me to her stalker. Someone came up and spoke to her, and I started to write a letter. While I was doing so the stalker came up to me and explained that he had not known who I was, but that he wished to thank me for the pleasure he had derived from my book. This to any author is pleasing, but what he went on to say gave me greater satisfaction.

" There is one comment you made which delighted me," he continued. " You spoke about that cigarette-smoking habit. If my father saw me smoking a pipe even when I was talking to the gentleman with whom I was stalking, I got a cuff on the head, and if I see any of these ghillies doing it he gets one from me."

The bolshie no doubt will say: " Why the devil shouldn't he smoke if he wants to ?" Quite so, but no one with any politeness would dream of smoking a pipe in a lady's drawing-room without permission. It is a question of ordinary

courtesy, and none of the old type of stalkers would have been guilty of such a breach of good manners. It is only ignorance. The majority of Highlanders have a natural instinct for good manners which many so-called gentlemen might well envy. The conversation and charm of the generation of stalkers with whom I had so many happy days on the hill as a boy, and whom I am proud to have called my friends, has left me with many memories which the passage of time will never efface.

But if there is much that has changed, the hills themselves are still there, and in spite of roads, Forestry Commissions, hikers and new owners, to a great extent unchanged. I am sometimes asked what I consider the finest deer ground in Scotland. It is rather similar to being questioned as to the most attractive woman you know, and who could reply to such a query? There are many forests in which I have never stalked. I doubt, however, if there is finer hill country to be seen in the Highlands than that which is bounded on the north by Kintail and on the south by Loch Morar. This area comprises part of Affaric, Kintail, Cluanie, Glen Quoich, Barrisdale, Knoydart, Glen Kingie, and Meoble. Certainly the finest views I know are:—Sgur-na-Ciche from the narrows of Loch Nevis; the Five Sisters of Kintail from the mouth of Loch Duich; and the panorama of hills which are seen from above Loch Hourn. For rugged grandeur

Corrie-na-Gaul I have always held to be the finest in Scotland. Knoydart, on the whole, contains the finest scenery, for stretches of water are always present, and for a view to be really satisfying there must be water. Since first I saw the latter forest, over twenty years ago, I have always considered it the most beautiful of any in which I have been privileged to stalk.

I shall never forget one October day on which I sailed from Knoydart to Kinloch-hourn on my way to Glen Kingie, where I have spent so many happy days. As we moved out from the bay of Inverie I could see the house of Scotus and the islet on which the Prince lay hidden that July day before he walked by night to Morar. Sandy bays crept down to the water's edge, the red of the bracken which fringed them contrasting with the greens and umbers, ochres and yellows of the grasses. Beyond the blue of the water astern the misty purple cone of Sgurna-Ciche rose through a gap in the rocks. In front lay Armadale and the Sound, with Eigg to port and the outline of Rhum. A white cloud of gulls rose from their feast of herring fry, betokening the presence of a whale. In the distance a plume of smoke and the red funnel of the *Fusilier* showed against the horizon. Dotting the fields which led down to the Point of Sleat were little white-harled houses dancing and fantastic in the haze. The blue and jagged outline of the Cuchullins lay dead ahead, rising

above the intervening ridge. Sharp against the hillside the lighthouse of I. Oronsay was reflected in the cerulean and eau-de-nil waters of the Sound. To the north, above the entrance to Loch Hourn, rose hills pink in colour. As we drew closer in-shore before rounding the point, past rocky islets, each tenanted by its little colony of gulls, the reflections drove me to despair, so impossible did it seem to catch their fleeting hues. Warm greys alternated with pink, sienna, green, vivid ultramarine, and wonderful oily flashes of light from the ripples in our wake. Loch Hourn seemed anything but gloomy that never-to-be-forgotten day, despite the meaning of its name. Arisaig gleamed white in the sun, with beyond Barrisdale, Glen Cosaidh, and Corrie Ghorkill. Let anyone who desires the sight of colour unsurpassed and in his heart peace beyond believing accomplish this journey on such a day. He will never regret it.

If, like me, at the end of his voyaging he is lulled to sleep by the roaring of stags and the sound of the burn as it rushes beneath Meall-na-Spardain; if, lying in bed, he can see by the light of the moon the very cave which for a day gave shelter to Prince Charlie, he will fall asleep on the very wings of romance.

For it is, after all, the surroundings which make stalking the sport it is. Compared to the shooting of big game it may to some seem tame. There are many arguments to be adduced by

which it can be made to suffer. It *is* artificial, but when all is said and done it approaches more nearly the genuine thing, satisfies more completely the primeval hunting instinct than any other form of sport to be had in these islands. The experienced stalker is quite happy even when he is not engaged in killing. There are only two kinds of deer he really wants to shoot: an old bad head or a real good one. The latter are not found every day. It is the search which makes a day's stalking enjoyable. You will see country which perhaps you have never seen before. There is probably a story attached to each hill. The modern stalker may not know it, but at least there is no harm in asking him. Your question may open the door to conversation which you had no idea could be so interesting. The stalker's natural shyness may have been mistaken by you for taciturnity. If he sees that you want to learn he will open out in a manner which will surprise you. A little knowledge of Gaelic is very useful in ascertaining the meaning of different local names.

Some of the old legends connected with the place-names of forests are of great interest. One that I heard had an amusing sequel.

A noted stalker many years ago had got within shot of a hind and was taking aim when, to his astonishment, he found that it was no deer at the end of his sight, but a lovely young woman. Lowering his weapon, he thought that

he must have made a mistake, for there stood the hind as before. Raising his piece, he took aim a second time, when he immediately perceived that he had not been misled, for there again stood an attractive young female. This occurrence was repeated, when, becoming rather bored with this transformation scene, he put an end to it by shooting. The hind fell dead, but on going up to it a wraith-like form ascended from its still warm body and an irate voice informed the murderer that from henceforth a hind should always haunt the glen in which he had perpetrated such an enormity.

Not far from the spot, as years went on, rose a small and compact shooting lodge which could at a pinch hold three rifles. Here the host and his guest were awaiting the arrival of a second one evening in October.

"Here he is!" exclaimed the host, as at length the sound of wheels was heard. Presently the new arrival, fed and warmed, was enjoying a smoke before the fire. The talk, as was natural, turned on the forest, to which he was a stranger. The day's doings were discussed, heads and weights were duly canvassed, and the story of the hind which I have set down was in the course of conversation related.

"You're going to the far beat tomorrow, so you'll have to start early," was the host's final remark to the new arrival as they went to bed.

It was late the following evening when the

latter returned. His host had not been out, and the other rifle, having killed his stag, was home early. They had finished their dinner, and following a hot bath the late arrival proceeded to the dining-room, whilst the others smoked in the sitting-room on the other side of the passage.

Drowsy and replete, they sat in comfort till a despairing cry from the dining-room galvanised them into activity.

"Help! Come quick!" came a strangled shriek. Dashing across the passage, they flung open the door.

White as a sheet, anguish and terror stamped on every line of his pinched features, his hair ruffled, and his hands frantically gripping the edge of the table, crouched their friend, whilst unconcernedly nosing the viands spread before her at the end nearest to the door stood a large and handsome hind!

It was not until she had been summarily removed by the horrified wife of the stalker, whose pet she was, that the tension relaxed and that explanations made the whole matter clear. "Long and loud," to quote from a book I used to love as a boy, "rose the laughter in the smoking-room that night"; but I fancy the chief actor still thinks that there was something a little uncanny about his visitor.

The Duke of Portland, in his entertaining volume, "Fifty Years and More of Sport in Scotland," mentions having seen a menagerie

proceeding along the Helmsdale road. An elephant was part of the procession, and at this apparition some stags near by fled into the woods and never emerged for the rest of the day. "Whether it was the sight of him or the smell," the Duke concludes, "I could not decide."

This incident reminds me of another story. Two stalkers who had made a night of it and were not quite so fit as they might have been were out together in a forest in Aberdeenshire. Through it ran a main road. Presently they sat down to spy. After some minutes one of them kept his glass focussed on a particular spot. At length, removing it from his eye and sighing deeply, he proceeded to take it to pieces and carefully clean the lenses. This operation completed, he rather hesitatingly again focussed it on the same place.

Glancing at his companion, who was spying the opposite hill, he laid it carefully by his side, and with a troubled expression lay back in the heather. His friend's glass came swinging round, and eventually rested near the same point. He, too, gave a gasp, lowered his glass, and turned to his fellow stalker. They stared at each other for some moments in guilty silence.

"Can you see it, too?" at length quavered the first.

"See what?" queried the other.

"*It!*"

"Well——" They both focussed again.

"It can't be," said one.

"It is!" said the other. Then, in unison, "An elephant!"

It was, too—one that had escaped from a travelling circus! The two stalkers went home full of good resolutions.

I once told Johnnie Millais a stalking story which, months later, he said was the best he had ever heard.

"By the way," he finished, "what was it?"

I tried several, but they were none of them right, and from that day to this I have never been able to recollect it; which is a pity. The following, however, I believe to be true.

A certain very distinguished personage arrived at the spot from which he was to start his day's stalking some two hours after the appointed time.

"Well, Duncan," said he, greeting his old friend, who placidly leant on his stalking stick awaiting his arrival, "it was a narrow shave this morning! I've got a bit of a cold, and the Duchess didn't want me to come out. In fact, she very nearly made me stay at home."

Duncan gravely pondered this explanation, and then gave vent to his feelings in a manner which left no doubt of their intensity.

"The betch!" he remarked coldly, and, turning, led the way up the hill. His mind, centred wholly on the day's sport, resented any extrane-

ous factor which might interfere. The personage, realising this and choking with laughter, meekly followed.

Another stalker had his patience sorely tried. Placed in charge of a distinguished foreign artist who had never seen a stag in his life and was panting to kill one, he was much incensed by the latter's behaviour. He, overcome by the beauty of Highland scenery and the picturesque appearance of his attendant, insisted on wasting much valuable time in making a series of sketches. His artistic urge being satisfied, they proceeded on their way, when, to make matters worse, he missed an easy chance. Nothing daunted, they continued to advance, and were presently rewarded by the death of a fine stag. Overcome with joy, the successful shot flung his arms around the stalker's neck and kissed him on both cheeks. Not content with this expression of delight, he next, to their intense surprise, embraced the ghillie and the pony boy.

I narrated these happenings to a matter-of-fact friend of mine. When I had finished he frigidly enquired: " Didn't he kiss the stag, too ?"

I heard a story about myself the other day, though I am not sure that it is altogether to my credit. However, it dates back a long time ago, when I was young, so perhaps I may be forgiven for the slur it casts on my character.

My wife and I were sitting in a car by the side of Loch Ness in a vain endeavour to locate " the

monster," which was causing a good deal of stir at the time. A policeman hove into view riding a motor bicycle. Him I recognised as an old friend with whom in times gone by I had spent many days on the hill. Blowing my horn I brought him to a standstill, and we settled down to a long crack. One remark led to another, till he said:

"Did you ever hear the story about Archie, when he was with a gentleman up on the march waiting for a stag to rise?"

It appeared that Archie, of whom some of my readers may remember I have written before, had stalked a good stag which fed over the march and lay down. The stalking party watched him for some hours, hoping that he would rise and feed back. At length, tired of waiting, Archie suggested that this preliminary was quite unnecessary, and that a good deal of time might be saved were his gentleman to assassinate him where he lay. The corpse could then easily be dragged to the right side of the march; that anyhow, what with all these rocks and heather about, it was very difficult to tell exactly where the march was, and that it was a very easy shot whatever.

This specious reasoning being rejected with horror, as of course it should have been by any right-minded sportsman, the party settled down to another long wait. Not, however, before Archie, with an anguished look at my informant,

had been heard to whisper in a muttered aside: "Oh, that I had Fraank Wallass here!"

I refrain from comment.

With regard to the inviolability of the march opinions vary. An arrangement is sometimes made between adjoining forests by which, where no harm can be done, a wounded stag may be followed. Stags, unfortunately, are sometimes wounded, and when they can easily be got at without disturbing the ground it is much better that they should be followed up at once and killed. This is not always possible, its practicability depending entirely on how far they have gone and the local conditions prevailing at the time. When the wind is right and the wounded beast is not near other deer it is foolish to leave him. On the other hand, an inexperienced stalker may ruin his neighbour's beat and spoil a stalk if he rashly follows a wounded animal without fully weighing the consequences.

There are, of course, no "rights" in such a contingency. To talk as if there were is as foolish as a discussion which took place some years ago as to the "rights" of ownership of a head shot by a guest. Some misguided individual, suffering from an imaginary grievance, argued that the head belonged to the person who had shot it. It seems fairly obvious that a stag, alive or dead, belongs to the person who has paid for it—namely, the owner or lessee of the ground on which it is shot. If he is generous enough

to allow a friend to shoot it, the latter has no more "rights" in the animal than has a stalker to follow a wounded stag on to adjoining territory.

When neighbouring forests are owned by men who know and trust each other, each can feel confident that he is safe from undue disturbance when they have mutually agreed that a wounded stag may be followed for a reasonable distance over the march.

Mention of "the march" never fails to conjure up some experience in the mind of a stalker.

I was once staying in a forest on the West Coast which contains some of the wildest and steepest ground on which it has ever been my good fortune to be invited to stalk.

One corrie in particular holds my affections. A long and narrow glen branches into a huge semicircular basin whose steep and rocky sides, strewn with huge boulders and riven by cascading burns, sweep round to a sheer rock-wall broken only in one place by a narrow track which crosses the march on the sky-line. Over the crest the steep hillside descends from a height of nearly 3,000 feet to a river which eventually wends its way eastward across Scotland to the North Sea. On the other side of the watershed, but a few yards distant, water seeking the sea has but a mile or so to flow ere it empties itself into the Atlantic.

Up this narrow glen my host and I were pro-

ceeding on a fine September day. The wind was right, which implied that we could explore the recesses of the corrie without moving deer over the march. One drawback existed. Before reaching the top of the ridge for which we aimed we were bound to give our wind to the east side of the glen. This was inevitable, as in any other wind the corrie was unstalkable. There might be good stags there, they might, when moved, remain at the far end of the glen; they might, on the other hand, be feeding round the corner of the basin, in which case all would be well. It is, perhaps, superfluous to mention that they *were* feeding on the east side of the glen and, of course, got our wind. It was two miles to the pass on the sky-line from the spot where their moving forms first drew our notice. Nothing could be done, and simultaneously we sat down to examine their heads. Deer, when thus moved, may settle after a comparatively short distance or, even though not greatly alarmed, keep moving. On this occasion, strung across the hillside, they moved steadily forward towards the pass. Their first headlong rush over, they stopped occasionally to stand and look back, but the sudden trot of some old hind would set them moving again, which was the more aggravating as we could see some fine stags among them. When there are several good stags together any head above the average stands out unmistakably. The sun was in our faces,

which made spying difficult, but having swung my glass up and down the line of moving deer, I kept bringing it back to one particular stag near the head of the line. Appearing and disappearing as he crossed from one dip in the ground to another, swallowed by deep burns and re-emerging on the far bank, it was not easy to make out his head. That he was good was quite evident, but whether he belonged to that select band whose few extra inches carry them into a class beyond was not so certain. On the crest of a ridge he stood, turned his head and looked back. I could make out six points for certain on one horn. Of the other I was not so sure.

"That's the stag!" said my host. "He's the royal we saw last week. I wish he'd stop."

Before I could make out the other horn he had turned and moved on.

The leaders had already reached the pass. Each head we noted as it appeared on the skyline. Into the haze which shrouded the base of the cliff the big stag moved. In the blue shadows it was hard to define even his form as he moved steadily upwards. Then the tips of his horns came into view silhouetted against the sky. My host was right. Three on each top. Then his whole form stood revealed. Double brows! He stood for a second looking back, then passed out of sight.

"He's over the march," said my companion.

" He may cross back in the evening. He's worth spending the whole day over. We'll go right round the top."

Presently the last of the herd, clearly cut as they stood on the crest of the ridge, had passed out of sight and we rose, shutting our glasses.

There was no need for hurry, so slowly and steadily we faced the long climb to the top of the ridge. It was two hours later that we reached it and three before we had crossed the shoulder of the peak whose cone-shaped summit dominated the corrie. Here we gazed across to the western islands and to a sea of blue whose loveliness comes back to me in my dreams.

We had finished the climb, but were still far from the pass by which the deer had crossed and which intervening ridges hid from our view. It seemed likely that, having put danger behind them, they would settle near the march close to the spot at which they had vanished. However, this we could not ascertain until we had reached the end of the far ridge. Following its crest we walked steadily on. The ground sloped steeply on both sides. A stone thrown from either hand would have fallen hundreds of feet. No deer were in sight either on our own ground or in Naboth's vineyard. Full of hopes and fears, we drew near to that last top which would decide our doubts. At last we reached it, crawled the last few yards, and peered round the corner of the rocks. The burly figure of my host stiffened.

" I can see them," he announced in a hoarse whisper.

There they were, lying facing towards us on ground which sloped gently from the summit of the pass before plunging steeply to the burn which flashed in the late afternoon sunshine so far below.

Our glasses were out in a second, and simultaneously and ungrammatically we exclaimed, " That's him!"

He was lying slightly above the other deer and beyond them, quite close to the march. A few yards to the north, could we have got within range, he would have been an easy and legitimate shot. But those few yards made all the difference.

" I wish he'd move," said my host, looking at his watch. " We can't do anything if he stays there."

This was quite true and it was getting late. We resumed our inspection of his head.

" Good points, but he's a little thin," said my companion. " I wish to goodness he'd move."

That he would eventually move there was no doubt, but whether he would move in time was quite another matter.

" Suppose," I began, " a hiker came up from below the pass, and didn't know he was there, and came suddenly round that corner, he'd go back on to our ground."

"Don't be an ass!" snapped my host peevishly. "There isn't a hiker."

"No," I said, "but there might be."

My host took his eye from the glass and looked at me, the dawn of comprehension in his eye.

"You mean——" he began.

"I don't mean anything," I retorted, looking at the stag. The stag continued to stare rather drowsily down the hill.

"I wish to goodness he'd move," said my companion again.

"He doesn't look much like moving," said I.

"You couldn't get there without him seeing you," he went on.

"Get where?" I asked.

"There—where you said the hiker might be."

"No," said I carefully; "but if a hiker was with us now and he crawled to that rock below us and didn't know the stag was there and walked on, I think the stag would jump up and bolt back over the march."

"Why should he crawl to that rock if he's going to get up and walk about afterwards?" asked my host, entering into the spirit of the discussion.

"Oh, I don't know!" I answered. "Hikers do funny things at times."

"Well, it wouldn't do us much good if he did," said my host. "The stag would still be out of shot."

"No, he wouldn't. When you saw the hiker

coming you'd have gone back and round below the ridge and be waiting just below the pass. When the stag came back over the sky-line he'd only be about 150 yards off. And if you can't hit a stag at 150 yards," I continued offensively, " it's time you gave up stalking."

My host giggled.

" Look here," he said, " I'm going back."

" All right," said I. " Lead on."

" You're not coming," he went on. " I'm going back below the pass, and you're going to stay here and be a hiker."

So back he went and I hiked.

I crawled down to the rock below me. I admired the view. Then I peered round the rock. The stag still lay about 500 yards off, looking very drowsy.

I gave a parched whistle. He remained entirely undisturbed. I gave another whistle. A hind below him raised her head, stared in my direction, and resumed feeding. I showed my head and whistled again. The deer took not the slightest notice, though a mere whiff of wind had sent them clattering up the glen in the morning as if the devil were after them. For ten minutes or more I continued to whistle without causing any change in the attitude of the deer. I even waved my cap, but they remained obstinately unconcerned. I hit the rock with my stick, I threw stones down the hillside, all with no effect. I was in a quandary, for if suddenly

alarmed it was quite likely that they might bolt down the hill in the wrong direction, when all my labours would count for naught, to say nothing of incurring the wrath of my host.

I was debating what course to pursue when a slight noise—a slight noise after all my efforts!—caused me to glance backward out of the corner of my glasses. A large red mushroom had apparently come into being by the side of my protecting rock. Very strange !

Suddenly a furious whisper hissed in my ear: " What the devil are you doing ? Why on earth are you messing about like this ? We want to *move* the stag!"

Not a mushroom after all, but the empurpled and blazing visage of my host!

" Well, there's the stag!" I hissed back, rather ruffled. " You move him! I've whistled and shouted and waved my cap, clattered my stick and hurled rocks, and I might just as well have been sitting in the lodge for all the notice he takes. I think he's bewitched."

The onus was off my shoulders, anyhow. If the stag took it into his head to bolt down the hill the responsibility would not be mine!

Casting caution to the winds, we stood up. Not a sign of interest from the deer! We walked boldly into the open. That did make him take a little notice. Raising his head, he stared at us. Two of the hinds stopped feeding and turned,

facing us with cocked ears. Then the stag rose to his feet. The deer bunched together. Next moment they were off, and in the right direction. Ten minutes earlier and my companion would have had a shot and avoided many future exertions. As it was we reached home after a long, tiring walk with no stag.

The next day I stalked an outlying beat while my host went in pursuit of the royal.

The Red Corrie, adjoining that in which we had seen him, ran north and south, the southern ridge forming the western end of the long glen which eventually merged into the main strath, distant 12 miles or more. A long search failed to reveal the well-known form, and it was late in the evening that he was discovered far down the glen, and too late for a stalk. It was not until long after the dinner hour that the weary but undaunted stalker returned to tell us of his odyssey.

Down the glen he went on the following morning and round the main ridge until he reached the spot where it was possible to spy the position in which the stag had been left. He was not there, nor did a prolonged spy reveal him. Up the glen went his pursuer, almost to its western end, and there at last, almost within shot of the pass he had crossed two days before, he was again found. A long stalk failed, and the royal moved back into the Red Corrie. Here at last, after three hard days' stalking, and

when it was almost too dark to shoot, he met the doom he had so long evaded.

That he was well worth the exertions entailed the keen stalker will realise, for his horns measured over 33 inches, with a span of just under 30 inches. A rough calculation made that night with the aid of a map enabled us to estimate that at least 60 miles over some very rough country had been covered in pursuit of this stag.

Judging by some of the articles one sees in the press, there are critics who consider deer stalking an effete form of sport. I wonder what they would have said that last evening?

CHAPTER VI • DEERSTALKING IN NEW ZEALAND

IT is many years since I visited New Zealand, lured there by tales of the enormous stags which, descended from imported Scottish stock, had thriven on the rich slopes and thick woods abounding in the South Island. Johnnie Millais used to say that the hardest walking he had ever experienced in pursuit of game was after the reindeer of Norway. He gives a graphic description of the country in the " Gun at Home and Abroad." I do not think I have ever known harder climbing and stalking than in Otago. I was young and fit, and enjoyed every minute of it, but it is a young man's game. Red deer, it is sometimes forgotten, are naturally woodland animals, and in New Zealand live in dense bush, from which they emerge in the early mornings and late evenings to feed in the glades about the river flats, and on the grasses which grow on the rocky tops 5,000 or 6,000 feet above. A day on the steepest and rockiest corries in Scotland is child's play compared to one in this type of country.

Lord Dalhousie's two stags and three hinds, from which the Otago herd has sprung, were

liberated in the Morven Hills in the year 1870. The Dingle, close by, when I visited New Zealand, was played out and the ground full of rubbish. The Hunter Valley still held some good stags, but the best heads were coming from the Makarora, then comparatively unknown country. As we were rather pressed for time we decided to go to the Hunter Valley.

The best head I killed was a fourteen-pointer, and though at that time he might have been classed as a moderate second-class head, he sinks into insignificance beside the magnificent trophies which have since been killed by other stalkers. Even now the recollection of all those incidents which go to the making of a day's stalking are vivid in my mind.

Every morning, circling round the tops, we had endeavoured to circumvent some amateur Caruso less wily than his fellows. Every evening we had returned with tales of some immature wanderer whose distant roars had brought joy to our hearts, and a closer inspection of his head a muttered anathema to our lips. A long hot day in the bush had given us nothing but stiff necks, sorely-tried tempers, and huge appetites. Once, a two-hours' stalk had revealed a startled seven-pointer, whose emulous roars had deluded us into the belief that his head was equal to his voice; and now, on the seventh day, we were despairing.

Stags there were in plenty, as one could hear, good ones too; but never were the beauties of

an Eastern harem so securely shrouded in coy obscurity, and though the imagination might run riot over their secluded charms, distances till continued to lend enchantment.

So we determined on a change of camp, and though, our resolution taken, the red god smiled upon us and delivered two victims into our hands, it is not of them that I shall tell.

It was on the morning of April 17 that I was awakened by the calling of the Paradise ducks as they flew in pairs to meet the dawn, and some two hours later started off down the valley, whose boundary peaks, 5,000 feet above us, were still swathed in mist.

We had a long, tiring day; and until three o'clock lacked any reward save the distant view of an ugly seven-pointer and his harem, preceded, as we climbed the hill, by that of a nice ten-pointer whose safety lay in his youth. At that hour, high up at the head of a big rock-slide, we saw the little royal, though what he was we did not then know, who indirectly, and in spite of many disappointments, brought us to my big stag and the end of my stalking trip. We did not realise all that lay before us then, and when at four o'clock I laid the tape along his horns and found that he was scarcely better than a Scottish head, I was disappointed that the reward of all our toil should be so meagre.

Half an hour later we started down the southern side of the corrie, not the northern, as

we should have done had we not seen the royal, and so came in sight of some scattered specks about a distant grassy slope.

The rock-scarred hills sloped steeply away beneath us until they were swallowed up in the sea of bush which swayed and eddied in their depths. Great bunches of snow-grass flaunted their waving streamers in the evening breeze until, 1,000 feet below, they melted into one indistinguishable blue. Across the valley more hills threw their craggy tops athwart the sky, rising stern and forbidding, with none of the melting appeal which emanates from every knoll and corrie of a Highland glen, yet for all that majestic and imposing. Over a distant ridge Lake Hawea caught the eye with a myriad scintillating points of light. From the rocky barriers which confined its waters a thousand twinkling reflections were thrown, and in turn caught back and tossed about by the very wavelets from which they had first sprung. Beyond, again, lay a range of snow-capped hills dominated by the cone of Mount Aspiring, dwelling aloof from the turmoil of a busy world amid the regions of eternal snow. It was very still, and save for the monotonous though musical call of the keas who circled uneasily around, we might have thought ourselves the only living things upon the ridge. On the ridge's summit indeed we were, but from the depths of the bush, though gradually drawing nearer to its edge,

came a strange hoarse roar which was answered and re-echoed ere it had time to die away.

Close by the keas settled, and with twisted heads regarded us dispassionately from behind a tuft of snow-grass. Reassured, they waddled clumsily out into the open and croaked hoarsely. Once again from down amid the rustling beech leaves a stag poured out his love-sick challenge in a long-drawn wail which came floating up about the heights encircling the corrie. Buckley looked at me significantly. "He's getting close," said he. "There's another hind," he continued. Even half a mile off we could see her every movement, so clear and rarefied was the air.

Its very transparency detracted in a way from the beauty of the scene which it pervaded. Nothing was left to the imagination, and the outline of a hill 10 miles distant stood as hard and sharp as one within a few hundred yards. Incidentally it became possible, as a matter of course, to take a shot which one would have regarded as something of a feat in a more humid atmosphere. For a few minutes the hind stood there motionless, the leading member of her lord's customary advance guard, apparently drinking in the calm beauty of the scene. Then she soberly moved, and was shortly followed by three companions. Presently, their fears at rest, all fell quietly to feeding. Before my glass was out another roar fell upon our expectant ears. Then out of a little basin walked a stag with

a head which in that light looked enormous. "One, two, three on his left; and two on his right!" said Buckley. I agreed, so far as the failing light would let me see, but it was hopeless to think of going after him so late, and rather regretfully, but full of hope, we finished the long walk back to camp.

The next morning by eight o'clock we were sitting at the foot of the hill waiting for him to emerge from the bush; or, at least, to hear his welcome roar.

In this expectation we were doomed to disappointment, though a regular menagerie of animals beguiled the time. With subdued quacks a pair of Paradise ducks flirted close to a swamp turkey, who poked about amid the flax bushes, his handsome indigo plumage and red bill contrasting strongly with the green foliage among which he paraded. A seagull busily stuffed himself within a few yards; three or four hawks quartered the flats about the river-bed. A couple of black rabbits (lucky omen!) hopped, conspicuous among their drab relations, until the advent of a lank black and white cat, who came sneaking along in search of what she might devour. At length, tired of waiting, we started up the hill, and despite the delay caused by the appearance of a hind with her calf, reached a spot commanding the corrie.

The wind was all over the place. At the foot of the hill it was blowing up; at the top, down.

The mists crawled sluggishly up the valley; clouds sailed steadily across it in precisely the opposite direction. Under the circumstances it was somewhat difficult to decide what to do. The stag might be in either of the corries whose lower slopes were covered with bush, and it seemed best to get above them and to trust to luck that our beast would feed out in the evening.

It was three o'clock when we reached the top of the first ridge, then, as society novelists say, " events moved rapidly to a conclusion."

Hardly had we seated ourselves behind a large tussock of snow-grass, horrible stuff to walk on, than a stag roared in the gully below us.

He was only a small beast, and as I watched another and still smaller stag walked out of the bush close to him and proceeded to thrash a tree in the approved manner of his elders. He would get the stem (it was a small celery pine, and through rubbing these trees many of the New Zealand stags' horns are stained a bright red) between his horns and would then rub it vigorously up and down, repeating the performance on his neck. I have seen stags do this many times; it appears to afford them satisfaction in the rutting season.

The stag who had first roared could hear, but could not see, him. He rose to his feet, cocked his head on one side and listened, but apparently could not make up his mind as to the next event on the programme. Then he gave a tentative and somewhat subdued roar.

At this the smaller stag stopped his warlike demonstrations on the tree, cocked *his* head on one side, and also listened.

They were too far off to watch closely without a glass, so as my eye was getting rather tired I had my lunch. By the time I had finished and had another look they had vanished, which was disappointing, as I had anticipated some amusement from their encounter.

Buckley, too, had disappeared. Presently I heard a whistle, and looking round saw him making frantic signals for me to join him. Seizing my rifle, I made my way as quickly as possible over the tussocky grass. "Come on!" hissed Buckley. "He's there." It was needless to enquire who "he" was; so contenting myself with the laconic enquiry, "How far?" I received the equally laconic reply, "A hundred." Behind me I heard the stalker say, "Quick, a hind's seen me!" and I peered over the low knoll in front of us. A hind within 50 yards of the knoll was making preparations to decamp; higher up the hill were some seven or eight beasts standing in a huddled group, all staring in our direction; whilst all by himself, and wonder of wonders! on the near-side of the hinds, was my stag. His head was up, and the afternoon sun glinted on his wide-spread antlers as he strove to draw from some tainted channel in the air that message which he never lived to receive.

The great red gods, Diana, or my guardian

angel, I know not which, held my hand steady. He gave a great leap, galloped 50 yards down the hill in a spasmodic rush, and I knew that his head was mine. Then he stopped, trembled all over, and as his knees gave way went rolling down a tiny creek until a ledge far below us checked his downward career.

" He's got four on this top," cried Buckley, as we scrambled down the hill. " Four on the left, too," I answered. " He's a thirteen !" we both exclaimed on reaching him. But he wasn't; he was a fourteen-pointer, and a beautifully symmetrical head at that. A broken bay snapped off short had misled me. Practically skin and bone, in addition to his broken bay he had smashed one tray point, one top badly and the other slightly.

Then it was that I blessed the little royal, for had I not stalked him I should never have seen the fourteen-pointer at all.

I had great luck with this stag all through, for only chance—or was it something else ?—led Buckley to explore that little side basin. Had I not killed him then I should never have done so at all, as it started to pour with rain the next day, thick mists overhung the whole valley, and four days later the conditions were precisely the same. But little we cared that evening for rain or mist, or for the long walk back to camp.

Of the post-war condition of the deer in New Zealand I had learned nothing at first hand until Lord Belper visited the country in 1925.

He secured what is probably the best bag which has ever been got there in one season by a single sportsman. Summing up his impressions, he wrote in his diary:

" I had no idea of the difficulties of the country. Unless the stalker is prepared for real hard work and very stiff climbing on very difficult and sometimes dangerous ground, he will do no good. Good heads are few and far between, and one has to work hard to get them. Of course, not nearly all the good stags are seen, as many never come out of the thick bush. We were in about the best country on the fringe of the herd, which keeps gradually spreading out."

The fact that the herds have in the past been allowed to increase unchecked, to which I drew attention in 1907, is now producing the inevitable results. The districts in which the older herds were originally liberated are now, I think I am right in saying, without exception entirely useless from the stalker's point of view. Rubbish of both sexes is predominant, and as Lord Belper points out, the keen stalker who wants a really good head has to penetrate into the very rough country to which the best deer have worked out. It is sufficient comment on this point to say that after his trip with Lord Belper, Con Hodgkinson, probably the best guide in New Zealand, was going out to " cull " the deer, and expected to kill at least 800 head.

Lord Belper could not speak too highly of the

consideration, sportsmanlike behaviour, and kindness which he received from Major Wilson (who arranged his trip), Mr. Forbes, his guides, and, indeed, all the New Zealanders with whom he was brought into contact.

Starting on March 14 from Pembroke by launch for the Makorara, the party left their main camp three days later to go up the Landsborough Valley. To illustrate the difficulties which the stalker in Otago has to encounter, it may be mentioned that it took ten hours to advance 10 miles through thick bush, four hours being occupied in traversing Harper's Bluff, a lateral distance of about half a mile. In this type of country the only paths are deer tracks, usually well marked, on each side of the rivers, but difficult to follow when they branch off. Subsequently, Major Wilson reached the top of the valley, which had not been done since Arthur Harper discovered it about thirty years ago.

On the 18th Lord Belper killed his first royal, the first stag ever shot so high up the valley. Five days later, after much hard work, nothing sufficiently good to shoot having been seen, from his second flying camp the stalker's perseverance was rewarded. The rest of the story may be told in his own words:

"About 2.30 we were on a fairly large flat, when we suddenly heard a roar in the bush not far away from us. It sounded a very good roar, so we decided to wait and see if the stag

would come out and show himself. We waited for four hours, when suddenly five hinds came out, followed by the stag. I saw at once that he seemed to have a very big head, but had no time to put a glass on him, as already the hinds were very suspicious. I crawled hurriedly up to within 175 yards of him and took a snap shot just as he was turning to go back into the bush. I got him, and when we got up, found to our great joy a wonderful head, probably the best ever shot out of this herd in New Zealand."

Lord Belper estimated the weight of this stag at about 600 lbs., which is by no means improbable. The skull weighed 25 lbs. before it was boiled, and the horns carried sixteen points.[1]

Subsequently the river rose too high to be forded, and several good stags which had been seen on the far side had to be left. Food ran short, and the party moved down, after encountering various difficulties, to the base camp, and then on to the Makarora, a march of over 70 miles. For the first 30 miles Con Hodgkinson carried the big head on his back through thick bush. Those alone who have tried it can realise what a feat of this kind implies. His only

[1] In "Happy Retrospect" Count Wilczek mentions the heaviest European stag he ever killed was at Mühlleiten with the Crown Prince Rudolf, September 1st, 1885. He estimated the weight at 43 stones 6 pounds, and thought it would have weighed more immediately after death. It was not weighed until the following day, when it scaled 300 kilos without the head and antlers.

remark was that "it was a pleasure to have carried such a splendid head." Lady Belper joined her husband before proceeding up the Blue River in the Makarora.

In her diary she notes the absence of birds, all the large wingless birds which formerly abounded having been killed in a few years by the stoats which were imported to keep down the rabbits.

Heavy rain delayed the travellers, and not until April 10 was camp pitched at Blue River Flats. From the camp a good stag was spied, and after fording the river, which was icy cold, and a long, difficult stalk, Lady Belper killed him, to find a very pretty even fifteen-pointer. A heavy storm came on, soaking the camp and rendering a supply of food from the base camp impossible. However, on the 11th Lady Belper killed a wild-looking thirteen-pointer with long horns and good points, and Lord Belper a good royal. On the 12th Lord Belper killed another very good royal in the bush itself. After an exhausting day, with very little food, the party reached camp, to find that at last fresh provisions had arrived from the base camp.

The 13th, a fine day, but very cold (the alterations of temperature are very trying, as it may be extremely hot in the bush and freezing on the tops), again brought luck. To quote from Lady Belper's notes:

"For the last few days we have been spying what we judge to be a very good head on the

mountain-side beyond the river opposite the camp, but he has been perched on the edge of a precipice, and would crash many hundreds of feet if shot. This morning we cannot see him, and A. decides to go and look for him, if it is possible to get up to where he was. From the camp it looks too precipitous to climb, being sheer rock-face and huge waterfalls. However, full of hope at 9.30, A., Jim, and Con cross the river and disappear into the bush. . . . At 4.30 they return with a magnificent fourteen-pointer, and give us the following account of the stalk. They had thought at times they would never reach the top, so steep it was, with no footing on the rock-face of the mountain, and a sheer drop of many hundred feet below them. The waterfalls had to be crossed, too, where one mistake would have meant instant death. As they neared the top they had to cut steps in the ice, and when at last they reached their goal, wading through snow, no stag was in sight. They rested for an hour, and, terribly disappointed, started for home. Suddenly they saw some beasts below them, and among them, lying down, the fourteen-pointer. He was sheer below them, 100 yards or so, and A. had to fire into the middle of his back, using Con's shoulder as a rest. It took the two guides about an hour to get down to him, cut the head off, and return.

" This beast was shot 5,000 feet up."

After this the weather got really bad. There

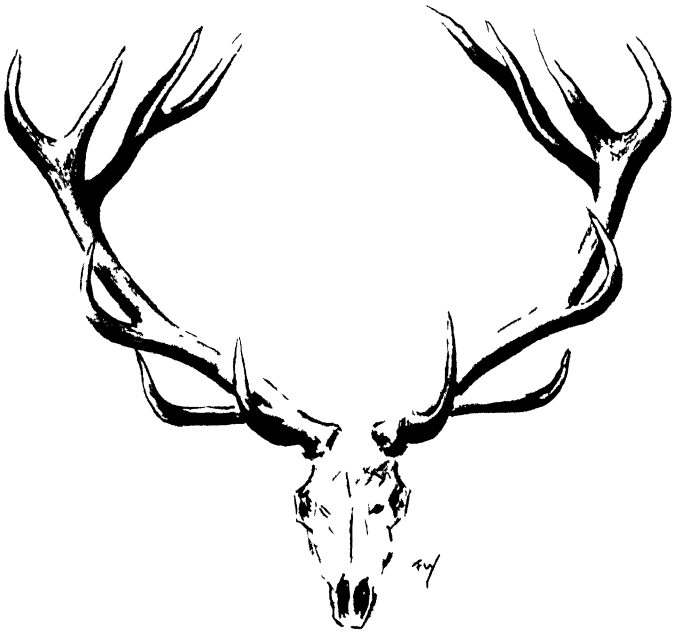


PLATE 6.—A PERFECT HEAD: 14-POINTER KILLED BY LORD BELPER, NEW ZEALAND, 1925.

was a heavy fall of snow, and 4 feet round the camp. It was vitally important to get across the river before a thaw, so, hastily packing what they could carry, the party abandoned their tents, and after crossing the river only just in time, with the water up to their arm-pits, reached their base camp.

Luck, no doubt, plays a certain part in the success of a trip of this kind, but no one who has ever stalked in New Zealand—and as I have already mentioned, I have never met harder stalking ground in any part of the globe I have been lucky enough to visit—will deny that a stalker who really works for his heads deserves every bit of luck which may be coming to him.

The chief point about the sixteen-pointer is its somewhat top-heavy appearance, due to an apparent weakening in the lower points and the extraordinarily massive character of the tops. It is much more symmetrical and well-balanced than is usual with heads of this type, and is one which a stalker gets a chance at only once in a life-time. The fourteen pointer (it might be called fifteen, as there is a small point on the right top) is an ideal example of what a fourteen-pointer ought to be, and is one of the most beautiful I have ever seen, from New Zealand or anywhere else. All the points are long, its symmetry and proportions are pretty nearly perfect, the horn is thick and rough, and the tops magnificent.

The lack of span in Lady Belper's thirteen-

pointer is atoned for by its wild appearance and length of horn; and though of Lord Belper's three royals it is not difficult to pick out the best, he would have been lucky to shoot either of the other two had the former been absent. The following are the measurements of these heads:

No.	*Points.*	*Length.*	*Beam.*	*Span.*	*Spread.*
1	8+8	48	6⅜	33⅜	41
2	7+7	45½	6	31½	41
3	7+6	44⅜	5	27	34¼
4	6+6	44½	6½	31⅜	40¼
5	6+6	40⅜	5½	28¼	35
6	6+6	38½	5⅛	33⅛	42⅜
7	8+7	38	5⅜	28½	36¼

I commented very unfavourably on the manner in which the New Zealand authorities were controlling the deer herds when I was there. Apparently conditions now are even worse.

The block system, an excellent one, by which the country was divided up into blocks of stalking ground, the allocation of each block being by ballot, has been abolished in the principal deer forest in the South Island. Licences, also, have been done away with, and there is no control over the movements of stalkers.

The Government were apparently influenced in their decision by the agitation of people who knew nothing of the real conditions, and by "crank" societies. These drew lurid pictures of the destruction done by deer to trees and the danger to native bird life. A sum of £6,000 was voted in 1932 for the destruction of deer, and

I understand that something like 33,000 animals were slaughtered. All through the summer of 1932 official gangs were at work in the best forests in New Zealand, and when Acclimatisation Societies applied for protection in their deer forests in the South Island, they received an official reply stating that they had been advised that it was wrong to declare the deer a pest, and at the same time protect them during the stalking season. Protection was apparently granted to Southland, where the quality of the heads is nothing like so good as in those forests to which protection was refused.

These stalkers, paid by the Government, hunt in pairs, and are usually experienced men. They are twelve in number, and do not have an easy time. When deer are regularly hunted they will not leave the bush, which grows up to a height of 3,000 feet, until after dark, and do not return to it till daybreak. Consequently they can never be approached, as their positions are unknown unless a stag is heard to roar.

Wapiti and moose, which inhabit a national park with very heavy bush and holding much native bird life, are not included in the " pest " class, which seems a little illogical, as one would have supposed that they were just as likely to cause damage as red deer. A writer in the *Field*, commenting on the introduction of these two species, states, incidentally, that those who stalk them reckon themselves among the aristocrats

of the sporting world, and that there is a very perceptible difference between the man who has a moose or wapiti hanging in his smoking-room and the man who has but a humble royal. The difference may be apparent to him, but I fancy a good many possessors of humble royals would question his remark!

The whole question of destruction by deer is, of course, greatly exaggerated. Deer in large numbers undoubtedly cause damage and annoyance to farmers and to young plantations. That they would cause serious damage to well-grown timber I cannot believe. Deer have lived for centuries in the forests on the Continent which still survive, save where they have been destroyed by man's agency. " There are vast areas of land in the South Island of New Zealand that are of no use for anything but game animals, which, managed sensibly, would provide an attraction for local and overseas sportsmen." I quote from an excellent article by Mr. Forbes, the well-known New Zealand stalker, which appeared in the *New Zealand Fishing and Sporting Gazette.* From this article I have derived much useful information. The deer, as I have mentioned, were originally liberated in the neighbourhood of the Dingle Burn, which flows into Lake Hawea, and here the best heads for some years were killed. Spreading further, they extended from the Hunter Valley and the Makarora to Westland, and to the basin of the Haast River

formed by the Landsborough and Clarke Rivers. Captain Haggas, who obtained some good heads in a recent trip, tells me that they are now in the Matetake Range, the Moeraki and the Paringa. The stags winter on the west coast, in which direction they have been spreading for years, and from this virgin country come back very fat to the hinds. In "Stalks Abroad" I gave some particulars of weights. Thirty-stone stags are common; one weighed recently in pieces and without blood was 30 sts. 7 lbs. In 1914 a stag weighed near Lake Hawea was 44 sts. 4 lbs. One is safe in saying that a big stag killed in virgin country would be over 40 sts. It will be noticed that the best stags have always been killed further west, as the deer spread, and I have no doubt that there are still many fine stags in inaccessible country, in spite of the prevalent slaughter.

But it is only in such country that the best heads will be got. It is difficult, unless one is on the spot, to gauge the situation correctly. When I was in New Zealand the management of many of the deer herds was in the hands of men many of whom had never seen a deer in their lives. A similar state of affairs seems now to prevail. Had the deer been properly controlled—a difficult matter in such country, I admit—the sensational clamour of ignorant busybodies with an axe to grind would have had but little effect. That there is damage by deer, that some have

grievances, I have but little doubt. The evil has gone beyond control, which gives the agitator his chance, and deer have been slaughtered wholesale to satisfy the clamour this class has raised. Had the deer not been allowed to get beyond control the situation could have been simplified to a great extent. If all malforms, bad heads, and bad breeding hinds had been ruthlessly shot; the Morven Hills, Timaru Creek, Lower Dingle, Mount Jones, and Longslip districts practically cleared of deer, and the numbers reduced by properly appointed stalkers who knew their job, the present situation would not have arisen. All the old deer country which I knew is, of course, entirely worthless. It is no longer possible to exterminate worthless deer. If the Government butchers killed all they could, spared good heads (which they do not) and promising young stags, and were kept out of the deer country during the stalking season in March and April, it would still be possible for local and visiting sportsmen to enjoy a measure of sport. This at present seems to be the only possible solution.

It is a thousand pities, for, properly managed, the New Zealand authorities had a heritage which would have provided not only fine sport for New Zealanders, but an attractive inducement for visitors with money to spend, and trophies which might have been the admiration of sportsmen all over the world.

CHAPTER VII • AN EXPEDITION TO CHINA

I SUPPOSE that every hunter of big game has in mind certain trophies which he covets most. He may or may not have got them.

The head of my dreams is that of one of the great Asiatic sheep, and I always break the tenth commandment whenever I look at the beautiful 60-inch argali killed by Lord Elphinstone, or the slightly larger head which my friend Jack Miller obtained before his untimely death in the war. These I prefer even to the heads of those wonderful sheep named after the great Venetian traveller. He it was who found them while traversing those dreary wastes so many years ago in a manner but little different from that which the wayfarer pursues today.

These sheep and the wild goats of Asia provide the finest stalking in the world, and the death of a good specimen the climax of an achievement which no other form of sport can equal. Next to one of the big sheep I would hang the head of an Astor markhor with its beautiful, open, corkscrew-like horns; and third, an ibex from

the Tien Shan. Alas ! they are but dreams, and their shadowy horns fill a void only in my imagination.

I have shot wild sheep in the Rockies, burhel on the heights of Kansu, and ibex in the Red Sea Hills. These, to the heads I covet, stand in the same relation as do the horns of a little Highland stag to those of his giant relatives who lurk in the forests of Galicia and about the banks of the Danube.

Next to this trio of my choice I would place the giant sable of Angola, a really good kudu bull, a bongo, and Lord Derby's eland from the Bahr-el-Ghazal. A first-class Alaskan moose, a 60-inch wapiti with twelve points, and a big Galician stag's head, with no "ifs" about it, would complete my list, with one addition—a perfect Scottish roe head. The latter is the only trophy that comes within the bounds of possibility, and then only if I have such luck as to practically exclude it ! I have been trying for him for thirty-five years and have never yet seen him in the flesh.

Such a display is unknown on the walls of any single individual, nor is it likely that it ever will be envied as the result of perseverance on the part of one man. The dreams with which we set out have to be modified, and in these days to have secured any animal comparatively unknown is, at all events, to have achieved something, and to have stored up happy recollections

for those days " when anno domini has you in his clutches, and the rifle and spy-glass are kept but to be looked at."

This I have accomplished.

It was in 1911 that Captain George Fenwick-Owen asked me to accompany him to China in an endeavour to secure specimens of that strange animal, the takin. Major Malcolm McNeill had a year or two previously killed a female deer to the west of Tachienlu which was new to science, and the species had been named in his honour. Various other kinds of deer had been rumoured as existing, and we hoped, too, that we might have the good fortune to come across some fresh variety in the centre of China. This seemed to be the most likely neighbourhood in which to attempt to find the main object of our search.

Very little was known of the game to be found in the interior of China, few sportsmen had shot there, and its possibilities as the home of unknown species were considerable. This still remains true. I should never be surprised to learn that a new race of, say, sambhur or sika had been discovered. The literature of sport in the Middle Kingdom was, and is, meagre. The only work, so far as I am aware, to be published since Mr. E. H. Wilson's "A Naturalist in Western China" is "Trailing the Giant Panda." This is an account of the Kelly-Roosevelt Field Museum expedition undertaken in 1929. The

country described is to the south of our own wanderings. Ascending the Irrawaddy in Burma, the party crossed into Yunnan, struck north into Szechuan, and returned by Yunnan-fu. It may be added that the expedition was successful and secured a specimen of the giant panda, which, though like a bear in appearance, is in reality a member of the racoon family. It was discovered by Père David in Mupin in 1869. M. Berezovski encountered the species on the Kansu-Szechuan border in 1892-93, and so far as I know, with the exception of the specimen killed by Mr. Roosevelt, none has ever been shot by a European. The American expedition was not successful in securing a takin, though traces of the animal were found. This uncouth creature ranges through difficult mountainous country extending from the Mishmi Hills on the northern frontiers of Assam into Szechuan, Yunnan, Thibet, and Kansu. They are said to exist in Northern Shansi.

The latest information with regard to the position of the takin in the animal kingdom appears to come from Mr. H. P. Pycraft. In *The Illustrated London News* (February 17, 1934) he writes: "On the subject of the affinities of the takin there are many opinions. The teeth, which are extremely important guides in this matter, it is to be noted, resemble those of sheep and goats, and differ conspicuously from those of oxen. It is unfortunate that no com-

plete skull is known in England,[1] but the remains in the British Museum show that it is remarkable for the great depth in front of the eyes; while the relatively short and highly arched nasal bones cover an enormous nasal cavity. This is a well-known feature of animals which live in the rarefied atmosphere of great elevations. We find a similar nasal cavity in the chiru, or saiga antelope of Thibet, and of the Thibetan domesticated goat.

"One authority suggested that the takin is 'essentially a serow.' This is a goat-like antelope, represented by several species, ranging from the Himalayas, through China and Japan to Sumatra, linking up with the oxen through the musk-ox on the one hand, and the sheep and goats on the other. But there is really no justification for this association with the oxen. Another supported the view as to the relationship with the musk-ox, basing his conclusions on the striking shortness and great width of the cannon bones, the shape of the skull and horns, the small and strangely shaped ears, the hairy muzzle (like that of sheep or goats), the shortness of the tail (a mere stump), and the large lateral hoofs.

"It is worth noting that one finds such phenomenally short cannon bones only in the takin, the musk-ox, and the Rocky Mountain goat (Oreamnus). That these three animals are indeed related seems to be indicated by the fact that they are linked by two extinct species—*Eucerato-*

[1] I have one.

therium and *Preptoceras*—found in certain caves in California. That the ancestors of these two came from Asia is practically certain in the opinion of the late Richard Lydekker, one of the foremost authorities of his time on fossil animals; and they represent an assemblage of ruminants of which the takin and the serow are the sole survivors."

This, then, was the animal we set out to pursue.

Mason Mitchell, who was American Consul at Chungking in 1907, claims to have been the first white man to shoot one. In "A Naturalist in Western China" Mr. Wilson gives the honour to Mr. Zappey, though Mr. C. H. Mears ran him very close. The former killed his animal near Tachienlu on May 27, 1908; the latter's, a cow, succumbed three days later. Mr. Wilson ignores Mitchell's claim. Mr. Roy Andrews and Mr. K. K. Horn have, since our expedition, shot the Kansu variety, and in the same locality. These, so far as I know, are the only takin to have been killed by white men.

In "The Big Game of Central and Western China," and in "The Gun at Home and Abroad" I wrote fully of the appearance and habits of the takin. To these works I would refer the reader who is in search of detailed information. A brief description of this rare animal may be forgiven. Probably no creature in the world has so seldom been the object of pursuit on the

part of the white man. A conspicuous golden yellow in colour, the profile is decidedly semitic, whilst the back-view inevitably calls to mind that of a Teddy bear. His horns resemble to some extent those of the African wildebeeste, but there are marked differences. I was once amused to see at an exhibition of trophies held in London a pair of takin horns which had been detached from their cores and mounted on a boss back to front ! From a spectacular point of view the head is a poor trophy: its interest lies in its rarity and the position of its original owner in the animal kingdom.

By the natives they are regarded as savage. Roosevelt emphasises this point in " Trailing the Giant Panda." Personally, my acquaintance with them was too limited for me to speak with any authority on the subject. Though I do not consider the takin capable of domestication, it is a fact worth noting that many animals which in their wild state are the most wild and intractable become, when adapted to man's uses, the most docile and tame. One who had only seen sheep and goats in their native condition would scarcely believe that it is their descendants which provide us with both food and clothing.

Travelling in China is a long and wearisome business. It is not a question of stepping from a train or steamer and finding yourself within easy reach of your shooting ground. It took us many

days' hard going after landing at Shanghai to reach our goal. The traveller, even in civilised countries, is often at the mercy of circumstances over which he has no control. China is not yet civilised according to Western ideas. In addition, when the wayfarer is ignorant of the language of those who control his destinies, the difficulties are increased to an extent which at times reduces his overwrought nerves to a pitch bordering on frenzy. He who essays a journey in China will do well to cultivate a stock of patience. It will all be needed. Travel here is like travel in no other part of the globe. The country is so old, so tired that one seems to have wandered into a world immeasurably more ancient than that which has been left. Its age is perhaps what strikes the observer most. One reads in the Bible of walled cities. There are walled cities in other countries. In none have I seen any which brought to my mind with such emphasis the connotation of these words. Small wonder that they are so frequently used to denote a place of refuge. On top of the walls of cities such as Peking or Sian-fu could be driven four motor-cars abreast.

The cities after the last named we left behind on our journey across the plains, slowly progressing day after day through the deep dusty layers of loess, or ploughing a sea of mud in which not infrequently the carts became almost submerged. A nation of crofters are the Chinese.

Painfully they till and cultivate each scrap of soil. If from the road they can steal a few inches, they do so. Gradually the road contracts until it can barely accommodate the traffic it is designed to support. On the loess plains, which stretch interminably in the centre of China, the original roads during wet weather sink into oblivion. Another is formed as some muleteer, more callous than his fellows, drives his team along the edge of some unfortunate's crop. A second follows, and a new road is formed. This again goes the way of its predecessor, and a third comes into being. You may, perhaps, see the traces of as many as five roads within a few yards of each other.

It is a long, dusty, tiring journey to the hills. It seems as if such things as clear running water, cool, aloof tops flushed with the dawn, the pleasant shade of leafy trees cannot exist in the same land as holds the parched, dusty heat through which you have struggled. At your journey's end they do exist, and here it was, above the thickets of bamboo, the clumps of rhododendrons, and the wild flowers, that we found at last the quarry we had come so far to seek. Not at once, for, having toiled up 5,000 feet of rough hillside, we spent day after day soaked to the skin and swathed in mist, cowering beneath an overhanging rock, termed by courtesy a cave.

At last one morning blue sky appeared, and

having climbed another 2,000 feet or so above our temporary resting-place, we spied, on the far side of the great rocky basin which stretched below us, the yellow forms of the rare animals we had come so far to seek. From the narrow ridge on which we stood the view was magnificent. To the west spread range after range of mountains, the highest peaks topped by fleecy clouds; to the north extended a wide valley stretched far below us, the whole panorama, save for the rocks and slides which gashed the sides of the hills of a vivid green. In this setting the takin, tawny as lions, moved in a somewhat uncouth and clumsy fashion. "The wind," to quote from the description I wrote at the time, "was from the east. A detour round the top of the basin was our only means of approach. The actual distance was not great, but it took us an hour to reach the spot from which the descent had to be made.

"Here a higher and even rockier top than those which we had already traversed confronted us. From its side sprang an enormous jagged spur, which stretched into the depths of a deep gully to our left. Stopping for a spy, we almost at once found another herd of takins. They were lying in the sun directly above a stone shoot, or narrow gully, which seamed one side of the spur and descended in an unbroken drop for 1,000 or 1,500 feet. There were eight in all—three bulls, three cows, and two calves. Two of the

bulls were sparring, while the calves played about among the rocks. They were in a much better position for a stalk than those which we had seen from the far side of the basin, so we decided to try for a shot. An hour and a half later we reached the summit of the mountain, attaining a height of 11,000 to 12,000 feet. The ascent was very similar to the type of ground we had already crossed. In the saddles, open grassy patches bordered by stunted larches on which were laid long roof poles and coffin boards, for the country swarmed with wood-cutters. No tree was of any size, for in a land where fuel is precious every large tree, with a happy disregard for the future, is cut down and cast into the fire. Others, saved from this fate, are sliced into coffin boards, transported down to the valleys on the backs of the wood-cutters, and so by mule-train to Sian-fu.

" Replanting is unknown. Bluebells, gentians, vetches, forget-me-nots, orchids, poppies, edelweiss, and an amazing variety of small rock plants grew, scattered among the rhododendrons and azaleas; meadow pippits darted among the rocks; a Siberian mink flung himself headlong across the path; a blood pheasant called from the valley below and was answered by the flippant cry of a fir-crow. Ever and anon the unmistakable scent of a fox was borne to our nostrils.

" Both our hunters were very excited, laughing

and gesticulating, leaping among the rocks in their rope sandals in a manner which was highly aggravating to anyone in heavy shooting boots.

"At length we reached a spot whence it was possible to spy the takins. They had moved a little distance from the place where we had originally seen them and were lying among the rocks with which the hillside was strewn. One bull looked considerably larger than the other two, though these were full grown. His horns were slightly longer and his bulk greater. A little apart from the others he lay, overlooking the stone shoot, in an ideal position for a stalk.

"Continuing our advance, we gained a position on very rocky and precipitous ground 400 or 500 yards above the animals. Here we put on some spare hemp sandals which, though very small and uncomfortable, were a necessity, as it would have been impossible to get within shot in our heavy foot-gear without making a noise. Even so I was within an ace of dislodging a large boulder, but fortunately managed to steady it in time.

"We drew lots for the first shot at the big bull, my companion winning. We agreed that on hearing his shot I was free to do what I liked. A steep crag of rock, sloping into lesser pinnacles, rose immediately above the bank of dwarf rhododendrons, sprinkled with wild flowers, on which they lay. I watched my



PLATE 7.—THE TAKIN: SHENSI, CHINA.

companion and his hunter get into position, and then crawled down among the rocks. In this type of country one can often obtain a close shot, but none the less I was a little startled, on looking over my peak, to see a bull and two cows, blissfully unconscious of my presence, lying within 20 yards. The big bull I could not see, nor the third, which was tucked away beneath an overhanging rock lower down the hillside.

"Cautiously I thrust my rifle over the rock, took a sight on the bull's neck, and waited. It seemed an age before the shot for which I was listening rang out. At last it did, and before my bull could spring to his feet he was dead. I heard a crash from below; the two cows dashed past me, and as they did so I fired again. As my hunter seized me by the arm another full-grown animal suddenly appeared, to fall among the rocks out of my sight."

On comparing notes a few moments later we found that we had the big bull, though, unfortunately, in falling over the rocks, the tip of one horn had been broken; a cow which had pitched straight over the edge of the stone shoot and was smashed to pulp; the two other bulls and the second cow.

Thus ended an exciting five minutes, during which we had secured a very rare animal. No particle of the meat was wasted, and though, reading this description, it might be thought we

had indulged in somewhat wholesale slaughter, it should be remembered that we had travelled long and far to obtain specimens, which it was not likely we should encounter again.

We were lucky in finding these takins in a place where it was possible to stalk them under such favourable conditions. In bamboo and rhododendron thickets it is quite another story. The game hears the hunter approach and loses no time in making off, as we subsequently proved, killing another cow and losing a bull after fourteen hours' strenuous exertions.

Having got our takin during the only spell of fine weather we experienced, we decided to move camp, and though before hunting the Kansu stag we spent some time after burhel, it was with the former animal that I will deal next, as, after the takin, he was the most important variety of game we obtained.

This fine animal was named from a female shot by the companion of our trip, Dr. J. A. Smith. The reader may have already gathered that in China, to render certain the success of a shooting expedition, an interpreter is an absolute necessity. Although a native would have been cheaper, they are not always to be relied on, and I count ourselves lucky to have had Dr. Smith's services. He had shot this hind in the mountains to the south of Tao-chow, in Kansu, at an altitude of 11,000 feet, in March, 1911. It is a species closely allied to the deer

found in Szechuan and Yunnan, and though carrying typical wapiti horns, approximates more nearly to the hangul of Kashmir.

One of the reasons why any member of the deer tribe is hunted with relentless ferocity by the natives of China is for the fictitious value attached to their horns. These are greatly prized and ground down into medicine. They even keep animals in captivity for this purpose, and a miserable time these unfortunate captives have. Such deer are consequently extremely hard to get and very difficult to approach.

To procure information from natives as to the locality in which a certain animal may be found with any degree of precision is far from easy. They will generalise to your heart's content, but when it comes to pinning them down to a definite statement they will either give the answer they think will be most pleasing to their interrogator, or one which by devious ways leads to their own greater advantage. Our half-Chinese, half-Thibetan hunters stoutly declared their conviction that we should kill stags with enormous heads. In an endeavour to get accurate information we pumped them dry, and poor Dr. Smith was continually interpreting and translating until he must have been sick of the very word "maloo" (wapiti).

This sort of conversation would take place:

"Oh, Doctor, ask him if there are many wapiti."

Lengthy reply, interjected with murmured assents from the doctor.

"He says there are many wapiti, but not so many as there were."

This probably means that there are very few!

"When do they roar?"

More conversation.

"He says they roar from the hill-tops every night. Their excellencies will not be able to sleep for the noise." Pleased grins and much nodding and smiling from the hunters as we digest this piece of information.

"I mean, what time of year do they roar?"

"The middle of the eighth moon."

"When's that?"

"He means the end of October."

"How many days' journey from here shall we find them?"

Consultation between the hunters.

"He says there are wapiti two days' journey from here, but it would be better to go five days."

"Why?"

"Because he knows a party of wood-cutters have been all over the ground."

Signs of restiveness on the part of those undergoing the third degree, and much to the interpreter's relief, for we are all very tired, we close the court for the time being.

The eventual annihilation of all members of the Asiatic deer tribe in districts in which it is

impossible to give them the protection of efficient game laws is certain. What I wrote at the time of the Kansu deer applies with greater or less force to all of the cervidæ within reasonable distance of China.

"Although realising the passion of the Chinaman for hartshorn taken medicinally, we were not altogether prepared for the actual state of affairs.

"The Kansu wapiti has about the most uncomfortable existence of any animal it has been my lot to encounter. From the moment he can run he has scarcely one moment's peace. The native hunters kill indiscriminately. A hind or calf represents meat to them at any time of the year, and a close season would be too ludicrous to be considered seriously. Having attained the dignity of horns, the young stag's life is even more burdensome, for he carries with him wherever he goes that which represents a certain sum of money to the indigent hunter. Even a small head such a man would never dream of sparing in the hope that it might grow bigger, for he would have no surety that he would be the one to shoot it. So it comes about that the wretched stag has but two months' immunity from slaughter—May and June. His head is even more greatly prized when the horns are in velvet than when they have hardened, and the man who shoots a good head in this condition may reckon on getting from fifty to sixty taels

(£7 or £8) for it. Such a sum, far more than he can hope to make in any other way during the year, represents a small fortune to him, so that we can hardly blame him for his zeal. It is peculiarly maddening, however, during a stalk, to hear the cannonading of native guns (and these make quite good shooting up to about 200 yards); to realise that neither age nor sex is spared, that the worth of a fine stag is estimated, not by the actual excellence of his horns, but by their value as reduced to avoirdupois; and last, but not least, that your sport for the day is over. Ethical estimates of sport do not trouble the native. He is out for blood, and when he can he gets it."

I had several long, tiring days when we reached our hunting ground before I saw a beast. He was a small stag and I left him. On the last day of October it started to snow, and at daybreak the next morning my hunter and I were on the top of the ridge above our camp. We heard roars and saw some hinds and a stag with a head of nine points.

The method of hunting adopted by the natives is to start before it is light, locate a roar, return home, hold a council of war, and start out again in the afternoon in order to catch the stag when he emerges from the wood in the evening to feed. They usually appear fairly close to the opening in which they have had their morning meal. I did not realise this almost invariable

procedure on the part of the natives, and we wasted a great deal of time owing to the reluctance of my hunter to attempt a stalk. When I did eventually start it was too late, and the stag had gone back into the wood. I followed him again in the afternoon, but he had moved into dense timber on the other side of the ridge.

The following day we stalked a nice ten-pointer, who caught sight of us as we crossed an open place on the hillside, and rather reluctantly, it seemed to me, moved his hinds, three in number, over a ridge and out of sight. It was a bitterly cold night, and early the next morning, after two hours' steady climbing, we found in the snow, which still lay deep in the shadows, the tracks of the deer we had seen.

For several hours we sat on top of the ridge waiting in vain for the sound which would betray their presence. The forest was thick, but sadly thinned to what it had originally been. Timber in China is cut with no thought of the future. Only about the villages stand groups of noble trees, and the disappearance of the forests, like the disappearance of the deer, is only a matter of time.

Carefully I spied each patch of open ground, but no dun form, standing motionless in the shadows, rewarded my expectant gaze. On a distant crest across the valley a wild-looking figure suddenly crept into the field of my glass and peered cautiously round. Over his shoulder

was slung a long gun with its forked rest. His flowing rags floated in the wind and in his hand was a thin-stemmed, tiny-bowled pipe. Presently I made out another squatting immovable among the rocks. Two of the local murderers out for blood ! At any rate, they were too far off to disturb my plans that evening.

It was an hour later that the sound of a muffled grunt fell on my ears. Only one animal could have made it, and I roused my hunter, who had been peacefully slumbering. Then it came again. After that, for nearly an hour, silence. Then as we stood on the edge of the wood it was broken by a magnificent roar from the opposite slope.

The ground was very difficult on which to make an approach. Sparsely scattered trees rose from patches of frozen snow, which crackled loudly at our footfalls. The rhododendron leaves rustled in a manner which I felt sure must advertise our presence, but when we reached a spot on the edge of the timber and were enabled to get a view, there, 600 yards distant, was the stag we had seen the night before, accompanied by his trio of hinds.

It was hard to know what to do. The light was going and the deer seemed to be moving on a course which would bring them to within 100 yards of where we stood. Would they get there before it was dark? Very cautiously we started to advance. The deer at times were out of sight. Once I saw the stag standing on the sky-line

250 yards off. He walked quickly out of sight, and we scuttled as quickly as we dared to the spot where he had disappeared. The noise we made seemed to me deafening as I slithered through the snow to the knoll from which I hoped to see him. Peering over, I caught sight of the hinds, their heads up, within 60 yards. Of the stag I could see nothing, but I knew he must be close. Then below me down the hill his branching horns swung into view. The shot was not an easy one, for the long grass nearly hid him and the light was atrocious, so that I was disgusted only, and not surprised, when I missed. He trotted slowly off down the hill, and despairingly I fired again. This time there was no mistake.

In addition to the deer whose pursuit I have described is another variety whose horns I saw exposed for sale in some of the shops. They are called by the native *yung-loo*, or sheep-deer, and were described as being smaller than the deer of Kansu and larger than a roe. Spotted in the summer, the hair is red and becomes darker in the winter months. They carry four points on each horn. This description seems to apply to some variety of sika. They are said to be found in the hills not far from Minchow.

The roe, rather larger than the European variety, are otherwise very similar in appearance. They are smaller than the *Pygargus* found in the Tien Shan Mountains. Mr. Edgar N.

Barclay, in an interesting paper on these animals which appeared in the *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* (ser. 10, vol. xii., p. 66, July, 1933), concludes that:

"1. The roe-deer of Shansi, China, very closely resemble the roe-deer of Sweden (the type-locality of *C. capreolus*) in all characters.

"2. The roe-deer of Central Asia, though resembling the roe-deer of Shansi and Sweden, are larger, but this difference in size is no greater than is the difference between local races in Europe."

The further conclusion he draws is that "there is but one species of roe-deer, and the names *pygargus*, *bedfordi*, and *coxi* should therefore be regarded as synonyms of *capreolus*."

I spent many days in their pursuit, for the roe has always been an especial favourite of mine. I saw one very good buck, but alas! my toil was in vain, and he eluded me. The ground on which they are to be found is very difficult to stalk and the roe, small in size, is very difficult to locate. I killed only one buck, sacrificing several chances in the forlorn hope that fate would be kind and that I should get a good chance at the one whose horns I coveted.

One of the reasons which makes hunting in China a matter of difficulty is the distance separating the homes of the game you wish to secure. These are widely scattered, with journeys of many days intervening. It was on August 6



PLATE 8.—SHEEPGROUND: KANSU.

that we had secured our specimens of the takin, and many miles away lay the ground on which we hoped to get sheep.

The burhel, or blue sheep, is in appearance more like a goat. Indeed, with the latter animal he has many affinities, and probably indicates the transition point between the two species.

I have never seen the head of a Chinese burhel which in size approached the best heads from India. The record head of the latter is well over 30 inches, the best Chinese specimen only about 26 inches. Fortunately, however, length of horn is no criterion of the sporting capabilities of any animal, and the blue sheep of Kansu is a sporting little beast. To obtain the head of any variety of mountain game a great deal of hard work is necessary, and he is no exception to the rule. Burhel are found at an elevation of between 10,000 and 17,000 feet, which necessitates many a long climb. The reward for such exertion, even if no sheep are found, lies in the satisfaction of an accomplished task; the wonderful air; the sense of fitness; the freedom from mundane cares and responsibilities; and the enjoyment of any wild life you may happen to encounter. This is why stalking in Scotland is still popular among those who appreciate such sensations, which, of course, are all intensified when the stalker is in country that is practically untouched.

Feelings such as these underwent a rapid

change on one occasion when I was stalking a herd of sheep. We had climbed, and it *was* a climb, to a point not far from the summit of the range, and intended to come down on the sheep, which were undisturbed and had no notion of our presence. Suddenly they rose and stared intently down the corrie. Up through its centre, blissfully unconscious of the murderous feelings which animated my breast, came a party of wood-cutters shouting and yelling at the top of their voices, as is their usual habit when indulging in conversation. Then they saw us. They gathered, I fancy, that their presence was not altogether welcome, and vanished over the ridge. So, unfortunately, did the sheep. All through that long day did we pursue them. Several times, having at last located them after the mishap of the morning, did we get to within a quarter of a mile. Always something occurred to thwart us at the last moment. I had, in fact, given up all hope of a shot, when late in the evening, on coming over a ridge overlooking the corrie where they had first been spied, we found them peacefully feeding among the rocks, and returned to camp late that night with the head of the ram.

One of the rarest animals to be found in this part of China is the white-maned serow. The natives usually hunt them with a scratch pack of dogs. Serow inhabit thick woods of fir and are seldom seen in the daytime. We tried a

drive of this description and, wonderful to relate, for such tactics usually end in failure, secured a good specimen, which fell to the rifle of my companion. A second drive had no result. I tried stalking them, and saw one which stood on a slope a mile off in a position which rendered a stalk impossible; and another at which I did get a poor chance and missed. Dr. Smith, who did not want to shoot one, invariably, of course, ran into them whenever he went out. One evening an old male walked straight out of the wood across a bare hillside in full view of him, and on the following morning utterly defeated the diminished remnants of the scratch pack. That is always the way. Whenever I go to stalk roe in Scotland, these, which up to the time of my arrival have been practically feeding from the hands of the domestic staff, who take not the slightest interest in them, vanish completely, to reappear with unfailing regularity on my departure. So I never got a serow!

It was after this, having waited for the stags to begin roaring, that we hunted the Kansu deer, with the result I have described. We each got one stag. The Revolution, which had broken out a few weeks earlier, was gaining ground, and it became obvious that were we to attempt to return by the route we had planned through Szechuan and the gorges of the Yang-tse we should be in for a very difficult time. Accordingly, after a good deal of delay, we decided that

the only practicable road home lay across the Gobi Desert.

On December 2 we left Lanchow-fu on our long journey. It was March 25 when we reached Omsk.

During this period we shot only five animals, all belonging to two species of gazelle—Przewalskis and the Mongolian varieties. They are typical gazelle in appearance, but instead of the short glossy coats of their African relatives, carry long, soft hair, without which they would soon perish in the icy cold. There is little of interest to describe in the manner of their approach, so I will say no more.

In all, during a trip which had occupied very nearly a year, I had shot, exclusive of one or two animals for meat, well under a dozen specimens. This, to one who has shot only, say, in Africa, may appear a ridiculously small total for so great an expenditure of time. China, I have endeavoured to make clear, is no big game butcher's paradise. Let me again quote from Mr. Roosevelt's book:

"It is no country for the inexperienced hunter, nor for the one who wishes to secure a large bag without undue expenditure of time and effort. An experienced hunter who is not obliged to hurry can, however, secure a varied bag, and be certain that practically every animal he collects will prove of great interest, with a very definite possibility of finding it a new species or sub-species."

Although recent information of the condition obtaining in the interior is not easy to obtain; though travel is difficult and at times wearisome; though it may take a considerable period to find a reliable and experienced guide such as we were lucky enough to secure; though the rewards are few and the disappointments many, the country and the game are still there. Were I a young man with the means and desire for adventure, it is to China that I should go in preference to the stereotyped haunts of big game which one sees advertised. The rewards to be gained there, if few in number, are none the less great.

CHAPTER VIII • AUSTRALIA: FALLOW DEER AND KANGAROO

FROM the point of view of the hunter of big game, Australia, though it possesses many other advantages, does not rank very highly. Indeed, the only "big game" to be found there is imported, namely, the Asiatic water buffalo, pig, and a few fallow deer. Kangaroo and wallaby are, of course, indigenous and provide good sport when hunted on horseback with hounds. Quail and duck shooting are to be had in places, and there is excellent fishing; but so far as big game is concerned it is limited to the animals I have mentioned.

I had left New Zealand and its red deer some weeks previously, and after an all too short stay in Tasmania, had arrived in Sydney via Melbourne. I had no thoughts of shooting when I landed, and then I fell in with Pat!

It is curious how the lilt of a song, the scent of a flower, or the sight of an unexpected face can carry your thoughts in the fraction of a second to scenes far distant from those in which you move. In a flash, at the sight of his lean, bronzed

face, Australia had vanished and I was back in Scotland beneath a Lowland sky.

Above me, on the hillside, a furze bush bristled aggressively against the skyline; down below a clump of rushes stirred in the evening breeze and through their green spears I caught the glint of a gun barrel. Before me was the grey stone dyke, just such another as that before which Greer of Lag set the steady-eyed Covenanters and shot them for their faith. Beyond, again, the yellow bloom of a stubble, tinged with grey, the green shoulder of a hill, a glimpse of bracken and more dykes. From out of the golden west and the fringe of the moor came a desultory line of black dots, topping the farthest dyke. For a second they seemed to hang, stationary and motionless, then bobbed to the bloom of the stubble and came gliding silently onwards to the wall from whose shelter I watched. The greater part of the pack vanished silently over the ridge. Of their number they left three, inert feathered tufts, lying behind the dyke. One old blackcock came steadily on, straight for the clump of rushes below me. As he drew near he seemed instinctively aware of some hidden danger, and started on a long swinging curve which would have brought him to me. He was not allowed to complete it. Above the rush clump I saw a dull gleam, behind it a grey cap. The old cock seemed on a sudden to falter, crumpled, hung for a second, and fell on

the stubble with a dull thud. The Right-hand Gun emerged from the rushes, picked him up, and the drive was over. Little did I think, as I saw him climb the dyke, that the next time he and I met would be 12,000 miles away beneath the Southern Cross. Yet so the Fates had willed, and as we rode out of the station gates later it was a very different scene which met my eyes.

In place of the soft grey lowland gloaming the fierce Australian sun beat on us out of a cloudless sky. The bracken and furze had changed to blue gums and the low dykes to miles of wire fences. They stretched before us in long, straight lines until their ends were swallowed up in narrow spits of bush which wandered down the dried-up creeks, or behind the undulating swells which rose out of the reddened, dusty plain. Wherever the eye chanced to rest it fell on the ubiquitous gum trees, stunted and low on the hills, in the open tall and erect, grey, lifeless ruins, so dead and gaunt that it seemed impossible they could ever have held a spark of life.

The dried yellow grass had given way to thistles, good cover, as I found, for quail; they, on occasion, to stretches of greensward, looking strangely fresh and out of place in so parched a land.

A little flock of spur-winged plover flopped clumsily away as we topped a rise, and the wailing cry of a crow, uncannily like that of a child in distress, followed us into the still, hot recesses

of the wood. Then that ceased and everything was quiet save for the clink of the horses' feet against some chance stone.

Every now and again a bare open space showed us a distant glimpse of more flats and deadened gum trees, which stretched their ghastly arms in writhing entreaty to the mocking sky. Scattered among them were other trees strange to me: willow-like hickory; wattle, which we know better as mimosa; the oak; stoneless cherry, though there is a small stone outside the fruit; and many another whose names I do not know. The sun was high in the heaven when we found what we sought: four dark forms which moved slowly out of sight into the shade of the bush. Dismounted, we tied up the horses and reconnoitred. Presently we made them out, three does and a small buck. A narrow, hump-backed hill rose from the plain, blistered and rocky. Dry creeks ran up to its summit and made red scars on its baked surface. A tangle of brush-wood hid its sores in places and the whitening limbs of dead gum trees strewed the ground. In such a spot the does fed, and it seemed unlikely that anything more desirable would appear.

I said as much to Pat and he assented. The does quietly fed up a dry creek bed. We sat on a huge top and ate our lunch. After this short rest we continued our circumnavigation of the hill.

It was my companion who saw them first, two deer under a tree, and it hardly needed the glass to tell us they were bucks, one with a good head.

They were about 300 yards off and seemed slightly suspicious, for they fidgeted round the tree as if unable to make up their minds to any definite course of action. For ten minutes we watched them, then the bigger of the two came to a decision, and moving out from the shelter of his tree started at a trot towards us. The smaller beast followed him. Between us there lay a hollow, slight but deep enough to hide all but their horns. These I could see bobbing above the grass, but their owners came steadily on as I slithered down behind some dead gums which, prone as they were, gave so great an air of desolation to the scene.

The two deer came steadily on until a bare 40 yards separated us, and that, as many a stalker knows, is a very deceptive distance. It looks so easy, as in truth it is, just to put up the rifle, fire, and over goes your victim. But in its apparent simplicity lies its danger, and many a time at so close a range the bullet whistles over the target's back, and he, poor wretch, lives to die another day.

One of the bucks put up his head, but which I could not tell, for the waving grass hid it and I dared not stir. One, I knew, was a considerably better trophy than the other and I wanted to make sure of him first.

Slowly I raised myself behind the fallen log. The tips of the horns I watched swing swiftly towards me. In a tremble I aimed where I thought his shoulder would be, then fired. I got my deserts. There was a rush and scurry in the grass and the deer dashed past me, fortunately into the open. Across a bare patch they raced, the big one last. As he reached the lip of a dried creek bed he made his own mistake and gave me my chance. In a flurry of dust they shot over the edge, but only the smaller one emerged on the opposite bank. He dashed on, and two hasty shots merely threw up spirts of dust beneath him. Just on the edge of the bush he stopped, turned broadside on, and gave me a beautiful chance. He dropped like a stone and never moved.

Behind me I heard yells, and turned to find Pat waving and pointing. Out of the creek bed the big buck was slowly making his way, looking very sick and stopping every few yards with hanging head. Presently he lay down, and as quietly as the dry ground permitted we began our stalk.

When within 50 yards he jumped up and made for the bush, but we headed him off and into the open. A moment later his sufferings ended.

My companion went back to the horses and then to the station for a cart to take the dead beasts home, whilst I stayed to perform the

final rites, and made one or two rough sketches. It was late when he returned, and by the time we had everything finished the day was at its close. So in the evening light we rode out of the wood and into the glories of the setting sun. His opalescent hues put to shame in their vivid colouring the sunsets of a northern clime. Splashes and rifts of intense electric blue split the background of glowing gold with transverse bars. Here it changed to carmine, there to purplish-grey. Slowly the grey crept up the sky. The blue and gold faded before it into intangible half-tones, and ere we reached the station gates the world around was lost in the hush of the velvety night.

The morning following was dull and cloudy, but Pat, knowing my predilections, had arranged that we should try for a kangaroo, and I had delightedly acquiesced.

Out of place in Australia seemed the grey mist which swept in long wisps about the low hills, yet even as we rode it vanished, slowly curling about the rocks and thickets to reveal, stretching away in the distance, a yellow plain whose shallow basin had once held a great lake. No lake was there now—the brazen sun had seen to that—but it was an easy matter to cheat oneself into the belief that the jutting peninsulas of rock which here and there ran out into the flat expanse were lapped about by cool lagoons lying beneath the shimmering waves of heat. An easy

matter : yet as I drew near the blue lagoons melted imperceptibly into dried and withered grasses, and I was left wondering at the unimagined transformation.

About the illimitable sweep of plain there was something stupefying, and a sense of relief came to me when I saw it end in low hilly tops which held a depth of blue, such as you find among the Surrey hills upon an early summer's day.

From the plain we rode into a region of stunted bushes and low hills. Here the ubiquitous gums had climbed in vain endeavour. Perished were their gaunt outposts, the broken remnants of an invading army, grey and ghastly, warning the survivors in the valley not to attempt so impossible a task. From a distance came the harsh cry of an English crow, and looking up I saw some thirty or forty white cockatoos settling on a dead tree. They showed up at a great distance and looked remarkably picturesque. These were not the only birds I saw, for later on we came across black jays; crows; magpies, with their white heads, smart liveries and musical call ; but no " galahs," the pink and grey variety of cockatoo which make the best talkers and are sometimes seen in mobs of as many as a thousand. Presently we came to a little rocky knoll, and out among the bushes hopped a strange elf-like creature, which peered curiously at us with distorted neck and then



PLATE 9.—THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH.

vanished. He seemed quite in keeping with the strangeness of our surroundings, and though we were off our horses in a moment he had been too quick for us and effectually vanished. So we rode on amid the gum trees and presently caught sight of another wallaby. He had heard us from afar, long ere we discovered his existence, and went bounding away in long tireless jumps, and was dodging in and out among the bushes and lifeless trunks when first we sighted him.

A crowd of gorgeously coloured little parrots chattered from tree to tree as though rejoicing at his escape, flashing into the bush, their gay red and blue plumage gleaming brilliantly in the strong sunlight. As they disappeared a large dark bird swept silently away close to the ground, and then, as luck would have it, sharply up on to a withered branch, showing the orange colouring of his under-wings. It was a black cockatoo, and Pat told me that he had only seen two in his life. Their export is forbidden, and I never heard of one in captivity, even in Australia. Their appearance is supposed to portend heavy rain.

It was by this time nearly noon, and as we had made an early start we had lunch before riding out into the dusty plain, alive with rabbits whose tails flickered and bobbed at every fresh alarm. We passed them by while Pat called down every imaginable form of destruction on their heads. It is difficult, unless one has actually seen with one's own eyes what a curse they are to Australia,

to understand the hatred which flares up at the sight of them.

From the plain we came to a park-like opening among the trees, and in a flash two great mouse-coloured forms went leaping into the shadows. They were kangaroos, and disappointed as I was at their hurried exit, it was something, at all events, to have seen them.

As with the wallabies, the clinking of the horses' hoofs had warned them of their danger, and one day's kangaroo hunting convinced me that a combination most likely to succeed in this form of sport would comprise rubber-soled shoes, a thorough knowledge of the country, and an infinity of patience. Ultimately I was successful, but I do not pretend for a moment that unaided by good fortune and Pat I should have accomplished anything. The most exciting method of pursuit is to hunt them with dogs, but this I had no opportunity of witnessing. The old kangaroo dogs were greyhounds with a strain of bulldog or mastiff. Now they are more or less a breed of their own, not unlike a heavily-built greyhound. A cross between a greyhound and a Scottish deerhound makes a good beast.

Where this form of hunting is practised the hound will get up near his quarry and, as the kangaroo jumps, will go for his throat and endeavour to pull him over. Kangaroos are dangerous beasts when cornered. They are often brought to bay in a water-hole, and in such a situation

have an advantage of which they make the most, for, seizing with their forearms any hound which approaches within reach, they will hold him under water until drowned. They have been known to attempt the same trick with a man. It is hardly necessary to add that they can inflict a very deadly wound with their abnormally powerful hind-legs.

They are extraordinarily quick at dodging a blow, as those who saw the Boxing Kangaroo in London many years ago will realise.

When hard pressed, the female snatches her young from her pouch and throws it aside into some bush or long grass. Whether this is done in an attempt to save her own life by ridding herself of an encumbrance, or in an endeavour to give her young a chance of safety, I leave the reader to determine. When going strong a kangaroo will jump about 18 feet. There are two varieties: the Red Kangaroo found in Southern and Eastern Australia, and the great Grey Kangaroo, widely distributed over the whole continent. The former inhabits rocky districts, while the latter is essentially a plain dweller. A full-grown male of either species will weigh as much as 200 lbs.

They feed early and late like deer, and in bush country are found, as a rule, in much the same sort of places as one would expect the latter animal to frequent, assimilating very closely to their surroundings.

It was useless attempting to pursue the two beasts we had seen, so we crossed a flat covered with bracken and the stumps of dead gum trees. Hardly had we left it than I caught a glimpse of something moving. Pat reined up and cried in a whisper, " It's another kangaroo!"

Sure enough it was. On our right lay a dried creek bed 7 or 8 feet deep. To avoid us the beast would have to cross this, so giving Pat the reins of my horse I ran to the lip of the creek and sat down. The kangaroo came past about 140 yards distant, dodging the trees in long, lazy jumps. I heard my companion calling to me, as I thought, to fire, and had a snap, but missed. It turned out afterwards that he was saying the beast would stop. Directly after I had fired it did, but behind a bush, and never gave me a chance.

I can see it all so plainly, even now. The burning sky, the parched valley between the blistering hills, the gaunt gum trees stretching on every side and beating the desolation of the place into one's brain, here and there little patches of green as though to bid one hope, the kangaroo dodging off through the trees, and Pat watching with puckered eyes as he held the horses.

For an hour or so we saw nothing, then late in the afternoon, as the shadows lengthened, came on three wallabies sitting out in the open grass. It was the first really good view I had

had of them. They looked very red and large, with something suggestively rat-like in their appearance. I was just getting the sights on one as he sat by a bush when he made off and was hidden in a second. When going at top speed in the open, one requires cool judgment and a quick shot to bring one down; in the bush it is about as difficult shooting as one could imagine.

I was getting rather disheartened at our want of success, but went on, and presently came on another, leisurely hopping about among some useless peppermint shrubs. He stopped for a second, gave me a good chance at about 130 yards, and this time I got him.

He was a full-grown male, but I had no time to take any measurements. We skinned him, an operation which did not take very long, and, tying the skin on to a saddle, went on.

Half an hour later, as we were getting down to the flat where I had seen the kangaroo in the morning, something jumped out of the bracken and made off up the hill. I recognised the colour and black tip to the tail before Pat cried out, "Quick, it's a kangaroo!"

Half hidden by a tree it stopped, but I could see the head and shoulders and fired. The horses plunged and reared at the shot, for I was very close, but Pat hung on and I saw the kangaroo going hard up the hill. I was in despair, as I feared I should lose him, and ran up, hoping for a snap through the trees. Then Pat yelled,

" He's down !" and I saw a grey mass under a tree. The effort had been his last, for both shoulders were broken.

So that was the end of my day after kangaroos in New South Wales, and very lucky I considered myself, for in two days' shooting I had got a couple of fallow bucks, a kangaroo, and a wallaby.

We had some little difficulty in crossing the creek bed, but eventually reached the station. A few hours later I drove down through the gum trees for the last time. White and ghastly they rose as the moon silvered their despairing branches and cast long black shadows on the ground. Out of the darkness beyond the white riband of road the station lights showed brightly, until they were swept into obscurity by a shoulder of the hill. Kind voices yet rung in my ears, and I realised again that the worst moments of travelling are those which must inevitably come when a hand grips yours for the last time and that sad little word " Good-bye " haunts one's memory with its mute appeal.

CHAPTER IX • CANADA: SALMON AND OUANANICHE

AT times I am asked, "Are you a fisherman?" To this I invariably reply, "No, but I like catching fish!"

A man who confesses that he likes catching fish—though that, after all, is the main object of fishing—is, I fancy, rather looked down upon by the genuine master of the gentle art. When making my reply I anticipate, now, the fleeting look of contempt, the change of subject it invokes. "No use wasting time on this poor fish" (if you will pardon the Americanism), is the mental attitude, and we talk brightly, or as brightly as I can, of tiddley-winks or bimetallism.

My idea of a good day's fishing—and I hope no true disciple of the great Izaac will read these lines—is to proceed on a warm sunny day with not sufficient wind to cause any undue chill, but enough nicely to ripple the water, to a well-stocked loch in which, preferably, pink-fleshed trout running up to 2 lbs. or more are sufficiently unsophisticated greedily to engulf my fly.

Here, with a pipe, an agreeable companion, and the sight of hills and woods of fir and birch, I can pass the day to my entire satisfaction. If, as specified, the trout are pink-fleshed, the evening during and after their demolition will pass no less pleasantly.

To sit in a boat in an icy wind, muffled up to the eyes in woollies, coats, and mufflers, exposed to every blast, and with only a chance, more or less remote, of catching a salmon; or to flog a high and roaring stream afloat or encased in waders in which there is every likelihood that I shall drown, is not my idea of enjoyment.

On the last occasion on which I fished for salmon it was necessary to wade. Fortunately the river was low, the month July. My host, some 8 inches below my own height, with feet to match, kindly lent me his waders. He also lent me his rod. Feeling rather like a very large sardine in a very small tin, I gingerly, with cramped toes, lowered myself into the river. A kindly but non-communicative ghillie from the security of the bank gravely watched my antics. In a manner which secretly I rather fancied I got my line well out to the far bank. It then became necessary for me to retrace my steps. Lulled into a sense of security by the ease with which I had hitherto negotiated any difficulties, these, on the return journey, as I slowly forged my way across the swiftly running

stream, had become considerably magnified. In the eddy caused by a large rock I stumbled, half fell, recovered, and plunged blindly forward, to find myself up to the neck in water with a broken rod in my hand. The ghillie, his face showing never a trace of surprise, solemnly assisted me up the bank.

"You'll be the thir-r-d gentleman that has fa-allen in this month!" was his only remark.

Whilst I was wildly flapping my arms in a vain endeavour to dry my soaking garments, he wandered out of sight down the bank to where my host was fishing, accompanied by his wife. His portentous demeanour excited their attention and they enquired its cause.

"A ter-rible cata-a-strophee has ha-appened," was his announcement.

"What's the matter? Has Miss ——" (who was fishing another pool) "fallen in?"

"Far wor-rse than tha-at," came the answer. "It's Muster Wallace!" I was flattered on hearing this, without discovering the reason, at the relative importance a charming young lady and myself enjoyed in his estimation.

"I'll go and help him," exclaimed my host, making for the bank, with that ready solicitude for his guests which is one of his most prominent characteristics.

"Don't be a fool," said his wife sharply. "Go on fishing. If he's ass enough to fall in, he can get himself out!"

How much more callous than men are women!

"Wull Muster Wallace be a relation of Mistress D——?" asked the ghillie of my host later in the evening when he found him alone. The answer in the negative seemed to surprise him, for after pondering for a moment he remarked: "Och well! I was thinking he must be, for she showed verra little concairn at his predeecament!"

In spite of her brutal remark the lady in question did lend me her fur coat in which to drive home. For this I was grateful, having only a vest, a pair of knickerbockers belonging to the keeper which would have been a fit for an ill-nourished lad of fifteen, and a cap to cover my nakedness.

It always seems to me that luck plays too great a part in fishing. The experienced fisherman will no doubt in the long run catch more fish than the bungling novice. The latter, on the other hand, may, and quite frequently does, chuck in his fly anyhow and catch such a fish as fills the breast of his more skilful companion with envy, hatred and malice. The novice who is, in addition, a bad shot is unlikely to kill one of the best stags in the forest; firstly because he is a bad shot, and secondly because he is very unlikely to be taken up to the sort of stag which the experienced stalker would regard as a prize. The element of luck in stalking, to this

extent, can usually, though not always, be controlled.

Fishing with a dry fly is, of course, one of the highest forms of sport, and in the case of a really fine fisherman an art to which even stalking can scarcely hold comparison.

Salmon fishing by the enthusiast is often regarded as the finest sport there is, adept though he may be at others. Indeed, there can be few greater thrills than to know that you are "in" to a big fish. My own experiences are few, but I still recall the tremor of excitement which ran through me when I hooked my first salmon. It was from no brawling Highland river overhung by birches and noisy with brown ripples and little lapping peaty swirls that I drew his silvery form. No Highland ghillie triumphantly snatched him aloft and laid him gleaming in the purple heather. It was a dark deed: the recollection thrills me yet.

Thankful to leave the glaring noisiness of New York, I arrived in Quebec one Sunday morning some years ago, intending to remain a day or so before going West. Diving in my bag, I came presently upon a letter to one P., and though on presenting it I learned that he was away, a subsequent telephone message dispelled the somewhat gloomy ideas conjured up by a lonely supper at the Frontenac.

No one who has travelled in Canada will learn with surprise that the next morning found me

steaming down the broad St. Lawrence in company with a man who, twenty-four hours before, had been ignorant that such a person as myself existed. The following afternoon saw us installed in one of P.'s fishing lodges, the last few miles being accomplished by means of a buckboard. He who has never journeyed in such a conveyance will fail to perceive how apposite is the name. The experienced traveller will cherish tender recollections—on his body, if not in mind.

Old Napoleon, who, on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, now endeavoured to prevent the younger generation from following in his own early footsteps, met us. He was a fine old sportsman, a French-Canadian. Not only did he guard the river, but in his odd moments acted as ghillie, cook, housemaid, waiter and valet. Unfortunately, he spoke no English, and as my French is of the low canine or public school variety, the frequent allusions to his early poaching adventures were lost upon me.

The river ran close to the little lodge, and by five o'clock we were following our guide in single file along the narrow track fringed by thick bushes. All the fish in the river, so said Napoleon, were congregated in the pool below the dam: 120 yards long by 40 or 50 broad, with a strong run below the dam, it terminated in a narrow rapid but a foot or two deep in the shallower parts. It sounds almost unbelievable, but within an area of 10 square yards (and that is well above

the mark, for it is nearer 5) were some seventy or eighty fish. P. estimated the entire number in the pool at between 200 and 250. Even as I made ready for my first cast broad tails and glistening fins swirled slowly into view and as majestically sank. Above the rapid they were thickest, so, starting some 60 yards up-stream, I worked conscientiously towards them. Almost at once I had a rise, but he came very short, and with one other exception this was the only salmon which attempted to take a fly during the four days we fished the river. And yet between us we caught nine! Have I not said the death of my first salmon was a dark deed? Those ardent anglers who annually migrate northwards in the spring-time, whose thoughts at the close of winter lightly turn to sport they love, these Waltonians will, I say, hold up their hands in pious horror at my backslidings. Ah, well, they were once themselves even as I am. No excuses dare I offer, yet it was more than flesh and blood could endure to see those lurking forms and remain unmoved. As I neared the lower end of the pool, in all directions dim phantoms mysteriously came and went. Oily swirls marked where others stirred. To one whose sole experience hitherto had lain in an indifferent autumn river it seemed incredible that every break on the surface of the water could mean a salmon. I cast across the stream and gently and religiously, according to the directions of Mr. Malloch and other experts,

worked the fly across the sluggish current. Again I did it, and yet again, with no result. It appeared impossible that even so small an object as a salmon fly could cross those few yards of water without coming into contact with one of those half-seen forms. Three times did I industriously work the pool, and never the suspicion of a rise. Then down the bank to me came P. and unfolded his evil design. I cast again. The fly came working slowly across the river. As had chanced so often before, a heavy swirl broke just inside the line. " Strike!" yelled P. I struck.

The next second the reel began to scream, a great silvery form came leaping clear of the water, and I was into my first salmon. The rod nearly leapt from my startled grasp. Even P., that hardened sinner, was for the moment taken aback, but by the time the salmon had crossed the pool he recovered his wits and began to shout exhortations and advice.

" Up the bank!" he yelled. " Keep your rod up."

One side of the pool, that on which we were, sloped steeply down to the water and, composed as it was of loose earth and stones, formed a very insecure foothold. Scrambling and slipping, bringing down loads of earth with every step, somehow or other I reached the narrow wooden ledge built above the pool, which gave a somewhat firmer footing on which to play a fish. Simultaneously off came the reel. Trembling,

perspiring and flurried by some method at which I could not myself arrive, I was up at the far end of the pool a minute later, the reel on the line still taut, and beside me P. openly exultant. Across the pool 50 yards away the line faintly cut the water. Frantically I reeled up and even whilst so doing saw the fish leap clear and fall back with a splash.

"Drop your point!" shrieked P., as the fish leaped again. I obeyed clumsily enough, but a beginner's luck was with me, and the fish still on as I reeled in. At length ever so slightly the strain began to tell. There came a series of spasmodic rushes up the pool, which finally collapsed in a fit of sulks just below the dam. P. left me and called out that he could see him plainly—"a good 15 lbs."—close in by the side of the dam, his tail up and his head down. There he stayed for some minutes, and nothing I could do would move him. Voices came murmuring across the water and in the little village opposite lights began to glisten. A group of men sat by the water's edge below their homes and discussed my captive. The soft aromatic scent of the pines, one of the most magical of nature's perfumes, stirred softly above the waters.

For some twenty minutes we waited until that portion of the audience on my side of the pool began to urge stronger measures. But I would have none of them. He was my first salmon, how insecurely hooked none could tell, and

rather than run any risks I was prepared to spend the entire night playing him. A dull splash sounded close at hand. The fish jiggled slowly out into mid-stream and as slowly returned. A second splash, and the movement was repeated. At the third splash I realised what was happening—P., mindful of his supper, throwing rocks in to stir him to action. I called a remonstrance, but it was too late. A stone better aimed than its predecessors roused him in earnest. With a dash he was off, darting up and down the pool, to the far bank and as quickly back, taking out yards of line and giving me all I could do to keep pace with him. More by good luck than anything else the hook held, and realising this he became crafty. In the shallows under the far bank were rough jagged rocks, and here and there, peering wickedly among them, he manœuvred for some moments; but the strain was evidently wearying him, and finding his efforts useless, he made as if to return to his old refuge under the dam.

A series of stones hurled by P., whose aim was improving, convinced him of the futility of his efforts and sent him off down-stream at full speed.

Compelled to leave my platform, I hurtled down the bank and stumbled among the rocks in semi-darkness as best I could. Through the mass of fish congregated above the rapids he went. Splashes and swirls mingled with hurry-

ing tails and fins. In a moment I held him above the rapids, but the strain was more than I dared increase, and though hesitating at the finish, he faced them bravely enough. With a plunge and a rush he was in their midst. At a stumbling trot, soon degenerating into a breathless scramble, I followed, the rod held high. In the darkness it was impossible to see where either I or the fish were going, whilst in the gloom behind I heard the encouraging chorus of those who waited for their supper.

For a moment he stopped and I got in a few feet of the slackened line, then off again for the next rapid. Beside a half-submerged rock I had a glimpse of a broad back which even in that light told me that the end, either way, was near. A black shadow crept out into the rapids, and, like some mediæval murderer lurking to deal his victim a sudden blow, I recognised Napoleon. A blur in the darkness, he crept among the boulders and made for the rock. Off went the fish, and Napoleon crept a little closer. I clattered towards him. A dull glint showed for a second above the water, the strain on the rod relaxed, and through the water towards me came the man, gaff in hand, and on it, feebly flapping, my first salmon.

Later he was followed by another. Salmon are excellent eating. I thought, in fact, that I could never tire of them. After ten days at P.'s fishing hut, during which period we lived on salmon

and fried bacon and eggs for breakfast, salmon and fried bacon and eggs for lunch, and salmon and fried bacon and eggs for supper, I felt that life without salmon would be bearable for some time to come. It was just as well that I did, for it was twenty years before I caught another—in that delightful little river, the Helmsdale.

However, as we had time to spare before starting on the hunting trip which we had planned in the States, we decided to explore the further fishing possibilities of the Province of Quebec. The difficulty was to know where to go.

"Why don't you try for ouananiche?" asked P., and continued to dilate on their sporting qualities.

Tucked away in the north-east corner of the Province of Quebec lies a small irregular blue patch, labelled on the maps Lake St. John. Should curiosity or interest prompt further enquiry on a map of larger scale, the investigator will discover a tiny black dot, one of many which cluster at the eastern end of the lake, marked Island House Hotel. It is a quiet little spot set down there in the blue patch, as far removed from the roar and bustle of the world as are the eddying backwaters which indirectly attract the wandering fisherman to so remote a locality.

I had heard much of the fighting qualities of the fish which lurk beneath those foam-covered eddies: that for his size the ouananiche was more

than the equal of his cousin the great sea-going salmon, and, too, with all his finery of dress. I confess that I was disappointed, not in his appearance, for he is a beautiful fish, but I have seen many a burn trout fight as hard for his life, and harder, once he felt the fatal hook in his jaws. It may be I had been led to expect too much. There had been no rain for months; the river was low; the fish were not taking well; I never caught a big one; and last, but not least, wherein I expect lies the truth of the whole matter, I am not, as I have said, a fisherman. Not to me has it been given to flog the water contentedly all day and take nothing, which is a matter of self-pity.

So it came about that I would lie back in the canoe with a contemplative pipe and, at peace with all the world, watch Johnnie cast dexterously across the swirling currents, his look of eager delight as the fish came scuttering along the top of the water in a final struggle to be free, his mouth open and his tail feebly beating the elusive foam. I enjoyed, too, Lessaid's accompaniment of strange cries; his brandished net, the sight of which gave the fish strength for yet another plunge below the surface; his exhortations to Johnnie to keep his rod up; his low fat chuckle as he drew the silvery form into the canoe, so that in the actual sport what did it matter if I was disappointed, with all this and more to charm me?

Every morning we would start early, for the world is young then, and in those small hours you may see many things for which you will look in vain as the day draws on. Only at its close from out of the west a reflection of one's earlier mood will come, lacking, it is true, the glad joyousness which then sent you on your way rejoicing, yet tinged with a faint, half-pleasurable regret, as the perfume of lavender which has lain long in some unopened drawer.

Once, as we went gliding down the river round a rocky point, we came on that which turned my thoughts into a more sombre channel and for a time struck the smile from even Johnnie's cheerful face. Above, the sun seemed to call on all things to make merry. The river went crying and laughing past "clear and cool, by laughing shallow and dreaming pool." Beautiful wild flowers came shyly treading to the water's edge, and there, crushing their beauty, half in, half out of the water, lay a grisly horror which had once been a man. His yellow claw-like hand was twisted under his head; a wisp of lank black hair floated this way and that as the rippling waters bore it, and covered his puffed and swollen features distorted out of all human significance. I only gave one look, but I shall never forget what I saw, and to give a kind of grotesque horror, that one glance told me that his nose was a bright scarlet like that of a funny man in a pantomime. A poor Indian working

in a lumber camp the preceding winter, he had been swept under the ice and so drowned. I wondered what strange scenes the poor battered derelict had encountered on its long companionless voyage through the weary months ere it made its silent advent into the world of sunshine it had left.

So presently we went on down the glittering river. I could not at once banish the scene from my mind, but Johnnie and Lessaid talked away in their queer French-Canadian patois, and before ten minutes had passed were laughing and chattering like children.

For all their gaiety and lightheartedness they did not forget the business in hand. From down below came a dull booming. Johnnie motioned me to reel up my trailing flies. In the distance I could see a cloud of spray, whilst the smooth surface of the river seemed broken by a dull, uneven line. Low evil-looking rocks began to appear. For a second or so the paddles stopped and we wavered uncertainly; but it was only for a second. With a long stealthy glide we slid out from the oily calm above the rapids into their very midst, the broken waters tossing and roaring all around. A great swirling wave broke suddenly close to the canoe; a foot off was a big brown crest. Johnnie gave a quick calculating glance the while, holding his blade wide, he steadied himself on his knees. The canoe jibbed like a living thing, then, as Johnnie, suddenly

galvanised into life, gave a quick sharp turn of his wrist, shot between the two as if she herself were a sentient being.

The river went shouting and rioting past, throwing itself into a myriad twists and curves, rejoicing in the exuberance of its own strength; but we lay quiet in an eddy, or so it seemed, till, as a black sinister-looking rock slid past, I realised that we were still being borne swiftly forward, and the next second were twisting in a miniature whirlpool. More rocks, some covered with heavy drift-logs, and all looking absurdly like bad stage scenery, slid past. Lessaid suddenly gave a sharp cry, the paddles flashed, we gave a great leap, and lay in calm water, though how we passed through that tossing foaming chaos every morning without even a wetting I could never say.

Through floating lily pads the canoe sidled up to a little spit of sand. Johnnie, his face all aglow, his merry black eyes twinkling, cracked jokes, to which Lessaid, his snub nose tilted high, his grey whiskers fiercely bristling, gave passing recognition by a ponderous grunt. They motioned me to disembark, for we had come to a portage, and, as I steered my rod through the thick pendant boughs which shut in the narrow pathway and clutched with vicious claw-like talons at my line, shouldered the canoe. Like some uncouth monster rising from a sea of lovely flowers it followed me. Great masses of berries, pink and red,

barred our way and mingled with the iris and reminiscent bluebell. The smell of the pines struck softly in my face, bringing with it vague indefinable longings, and tremulously stirred with unseen fingers the latent hopes which I longed to, and yet could not, express. Involuntarily I raised my eyes, conscious of some presence flitting behind the watchful stems; but the time had not yet come, and before me the wide sunlit glade basked tenantless save for the whispering of the morning breeze. Perhaps the rustling which I had heard was caused by the passage of some unseen presence. Beyond the sun-bathed opening gutted pine stems reached down to the water's edge. The fresh green of young foliage crept about their trunks and strove to cover their nakedness. But the pines, one rank above another, stood there stiff and erect, as though resenting an intrusion they were powerless to prevent. The lily pads came rippling in on tiny waves to watch them. The river widened out into a little lake, and through the green discs we slid out once again on to its calm bosom. Round a bend came the flash of a rod. A silvery form splashed and glittered in the water. " Good win-an-eesh !" said Johnnie, and paddled on. Where the foam curved in strange shapes and half-circles I could see lazy fins and vanishing tails disturb the eddies. All the long glorious morning we would drift lazily from one big pool to another. Hardly the fins and tails would

show themselves, despite the black shadow of the canoe; or, as was more frequent, there would come a swirl in the water out of reach of the fly (and you may be sure that it was at the more distant swirls that Johnnie would ejaculate: " Beeg win-an-eesh !"), as though to tantalise us.

On some little wooded islet we would take our lunch—ouananiche fried over a fire of fir splinters—and as the blue smoke rose on the still air above the sweet-smelling pine needles I dreamed those dreams which the breath of a city kills.

Ismaquhes, the fish hawk, came sweeping from his blasted pine stem, uttering a shrill cry, curiously plaintive for so large a bird, as though to assure the young ones he had left that they at least were safe, and then, as he swept over our heads, a grating defiance to the disturbers of his peace. Meeko the squirrel peeked and peered through the long grasses as though to find out what it was all about. Butterflies black and white, orange and blue, flitted here and there about the splashes of sunlight. A woodpecker popped his head around a tree trunk, as though to pass the time of day, and then, astonished at his own temerity, popped back again. Reassured at the immobility of the strange object lying on the fir boughs, he was back again directly, and soon I heard him hammering gaily away as he climbed out of sight among the fir tops. The great aisles of the wood stretched

away into the distance. A thousand cobwebs, perplexing to the eye, like jewelled threads, stretched about the bushes and filled the shadows with light; there was a sound of many waters in my ears; the wood seemed on a sudden to grow very still. The pipe fell from my mouth and lay unheeded.

When I awoke it was already late, and a little pile of still, silver bodies testified to my laziness and Johnnie's energy. So we adventured forth again, a spoon substituted for a fly, and paddled along close in about the reeds. Presently there came a terrific tug; the reel began to scream. I suspected a weed, but Johnnie cried: "Beeg pike!" and sure enough it was. For ten minutes we saw nothing. Then we coaxed him into a small bay and I reeled cautiously up. Directly below the canoe against the white sandy bottom I saw a wicked shark-like monster. He turned his head and saw the canoe above him. In a flash he was gone, and the line began to sing. Again he came gliding past, this time a little nearer, his flat ugly head and gaping jaws plainly to be seen. Then the rod broke. I knew it was weak, Johnnie having obligingly broken it for me on a wretched perch a few days previously. Now a light trout rod with a badly spliced top is not the best thing in the world with which to catch 18-lb. pike. However, it was all we had, and fortunately the line held. The monster struggled feebly on the surface of the shallows;

a deft finger closed over each wicked little eye; he was heaved on to the shelving sand, and that was the end of him.

So in the evening light we paddled gently back over the darkening water. Kehonka, the wild goose, went winging his way up the river, over the wild duck softly calling her brood around her, and the reeds wherein she had made her home. On either bank long luxuriant grasses rose, cut off from the river by narrow spits of sand. Beyond them lay a tangled mass of undergrowth, dark spruces rising above, with here and there the pathetic skeleton of a fallen trunk. Through an inlet I had a glimpse over the salmon and green of the water of faint blue hills; up past a little sandy isthmus rocky islands caught my eye; while round a bend everything lay hidden in the blue haze of a forest fire. Wild roses shyly greeted the passing canoe from amid the rocks and shaggy thickets. Across the water a dragon-fly went booming and hung on vibrant wings above us, then, dissatisfied with his inspection, betook himself off and vanished amid the clustering roses. Ahead I caught the deadened whisper of the rapids, which drew level as we crossed the portage, until finally their murmur died behind.

And so in the velvet hush of the darkening twilight, a star or two winking palely in the evening sky, we came to the little landing stage and to our voyage's end. But the great river

went gliding quietly and silently by, never stopping until it had finished its ceaseless journeying and stilled the call which sent it hurrying to the vast bosom of the St. Lawrence and to the grey seas beyond.

CHAPTER X • THE SUDAN: IBEX, BUFFALO, AND LION

"WANDERING holds a fascination difficult to explain to those who have not known the joys of the hunting trail, and we who have tasted of its past glories know that, although life is so short, at least we have lived and sometimes touched the high tops of human enjoyment." So wrote my dear old friend Johnnie Millais, who knew "the high tops of human enjoyment" better than most men, and in his many writings communicated much of that joy to his readers.

Whether it be the hot sun of Africa which beats upon him as he peers with puckered eyes across the plains; whether it be an icy wind from the battlemented crags of some vast mountain range in the heart of Asia which blows upon him as he cowers "where the boulders and the snow lie, while the head of heads is feeding out of range"; whether he struggles through some tropical jungle, or moves stealthily amid forests of birch and pine, there will in the heart of the born wanderer be joy, in his ears the echo of an

ageless song, and on his lips a pæan of thanksgiving. Some there are who throughout their lives know nothing of such an uplifting. They are to be pitied. Deep in those who have lies an ache which never can be satisfied.

"You'd better come!" said Brock. "You'd better go!" said my wife, so go I did, having arranged that she should join me later in Khartoum.

It was several months later that, steaming down the Red Sea, I looked with a new interest at the range of hills which ran behind the seaboard to the west. I had seen them before, but never had they beckoned with such alluring possibilities. "The Kashmir of Africa," in Major Maydon's happy phrase, they are "the only true mountain district with its own special game which Africa offers to the hunter." Nine or ten different species are to be found in these hills between Port Sudan and Eritrea. The only one which I was intent on securing was the ibex.

So to Port Sudan we came. It is on record that an American tourist after landing encountered a resident. "Say, Bo, do you live here?" was his query. On being given an answer in the affirmative, he gazed around, pondered a moment, and asked: "Does it hurt?"

Some, I suppose, might share his feelings. To me it was the gateway to the happy hunting grounds from which I had so long been absent.

Thirty years ago, in the bad old days, Port

Sudan was non-existent. Suakin, 37 miles distant down the coast, was then a flourishing harbour town, but it was unsuited to large ships, so by order of the Government was created Port Sudan. It may in the future develop into one of the great air stations of Africa, for here the routes from north to south and from east to west converge.

I only remained a couple of days, as I wished to reach Khartoum by the end of January, and had but three weeks in which to do all I wanted. My stay was made pleasant by much hospitality. Of no shooting trip which I have been lucky enough to undertake do I cherish more happy recollections than of that in the Sudan. It is difficult to write with moderation of all the kindness, help, and sympathy which I received from officials and others. Cheery and keen on their work, they welcome the stranger within their gates in a manner which suggests that it gives them real pleasure to do so. " In no place is the system of British rule better exemplified than in the Sudan. The Sudan political service may justly claim to be one of the finest in the world. Not a little of its distinction is due to the fact that at its inception its members were recruited from the best material the universities could produce."

In the course of varied wanderings I have met many officials. Some—indeed, the majority— like those of the Sudan, do all they can to make the

visitor feel at home and render him every help in their power. Others become so obsessed with the idea of their own importance, clothed as they are with a brief authority, that they lose not only all sense of proportion, but any latent humour with which they may have once been blessed. Pompous, jaundiced, and obese, they appear to think that they bestow a benefit on those with whom they confer by allowing them to breathe the same air as that which they expel in the ponderous periods deemed by them a substitute for conversation. Not once in the Sudan did I meet with any of this type, nor do I believe that there they are to be found. In other places such do exist. I only trust it may never be the misfortune of the reader to encounter this comparatively rare but unmistakable species.

In the house of one official I noticed a splendid pair of horns, which to me appeared to be those of a domestic ox. I enquired as to their origin.

"That," said my host, with a perfectly grave face, "is the head of a Peruvian kudu." Then, seeing my sceptical look, he told me that he often took in tourists with this explanation. If they were acquainted with the fauna of Peru he transferred the locality to Ecuador. One lady, who ought to have known better, exclaimed ecstatically to her husband: "My, Martin! Say, aren't those just the most perfectly matched pair of kudu horns you ever saw!"

I recollect one evening sitting on the roof of



PLATE 10.—A GORGE IN THE RED SEA HILLS.

a house, gaily lit with coloured lights and awnings, watching a gorgeous sunset over the hills. It was exactly like a stage setting. They looked so close that it seemed one could reach their outskirts by a gentle stroll. In reality they are distant 10 miles. In rarefied air such appearances are very deceptive, as was proved by the visitor to Calgary who started to walk to the Rockies before breakfast, only to find that they were 80 miles away.

It had been bitterly cold at Port Said, but the weather now was pleasantly warm, though with a good deal of wind. Indeed, the constant wind is one of my chief recollections of the time I spent in this part of Africa. Whilst waiting in the passes for ibex I have often been as cold as on a Scottish hillside.

It was twelve days after leaving England that I started southward by motor lorry. Averaging about 10 miles an hour, we passed Suakin when the morning was well advanced. Quite deserted, it is now a city of the dead. Here pilgrims, who may have spent years preparing for the journey, embark for Mecca. Its houses stand empty, its wharves are deserted, yet a curious impression is left on the mind of the traveller. It seems that only temporarily are they vacated; that just beyond one's vision over the skyline are waiting caravans and strings of camels; that at a given signal they will approach to throng once more its busy streets and people once again the empty

houses. It is but an illusion. The houses, sound though they may appear, are crumbling into decay; the glory has departed.

Our way for the most part ran through flat and featureless country. Low, straight-topped thorn trees, scrub and tussocky grass, at times broke the monotony of the view with an occasional glimpse of gazelle. Those wayfarers we met had intelligent open faces, and walked with an air of independence. Some carried swords or spears.

Late in the afternoon we reached Tokar, about 100 miles from Port Sudan. Sandstorms are continuous here from May to September; but there are no malarial mosquitoes.

The most appalling place which it has ever been my lot to visit is Butte, Montana. Tokar runs it pretty close! Those who are at all hazy as to the exact meaning of the phrase "the abomination of desolation" will gain a very fair idea of it if they approach Tokar in a sandstorm. Though not in an actual storm, we were enveloped in sand. How the driver knew the road I am unable to surmise. It was marked at intervals by pieces of railway line sticking from the sand. Here and there direction posts marked "Tokar" seemed to elucidate the puzzle, but as the majority of these pointed directly upwards, one ignorant of the locality might have been forgiven for thinking the word a synonym of heaven. Others lay buried in sand, but the

apparently endless detours in which my Jehu indulged were not so conjectureless as they appeared. Always eventually we struck again the line of direction. We seemed to hang on the world's edge, and that, having advanced but a few hundred yards, should crash into infinite space. The horizon swam, nebulous and indefinite, set about with formless fir woods and misty lagoons. Through the vague immensity a row of stems would appear which the eye failed to focus. A glass revealed their tops solidified into the fixed and solid shapes of men, small but definite. Under their minute figures swayed and minced the legs of camels, fluid and uncertain, as the forms of fish seen dimly in a tank.

I was not sorry when a few buildings appearing through the gloom heralded our arrival, and the dinner to which the District Commissioner was kind enough to invite me soon obliterated all unpleasant memories.

He had already arranged for my shikari to meet me, and a day later we started for the hills. It was my first experience of riding a camel for a journey of any length. Once accustomed to it, there are many more uncomfortable modes of progression; but it is advisable to have something soft on which to sit !

" The Arabs are reputed to have ninety-nine ways of calling on Allah. The camel knows the hundredth; hence the look on his face of self-conscious superiority," so writes H. W. in

" Something New out of Africa," a fascinating book which emphasises the difference between the old and new works on travel, for this deals entirely with journeying by air.

I had hoped to be able to obtain an ibex by stalking, but as my time was limited and this procedure would have involved a good deal of delay, I decided to employ the more usual method and " move " them. This, of course, meant that I should need more men. The number originally fixed by my shikari as being necessary was twelve, but at each fresh place in which we pitched camp and strange Hadendowa appeared, the number seemed to expand until another dozen had been added. For this I was prepared. They were a nice crowd and extraordinarily active. I felt like a dray-horse among a lot of polo ponies when once we got among the hills.

To recapitulate the details of each drive would be wearisome; many were failures, but one at last brought success.

The hills stretched north and south, a panorama of sharp-pointed peaks and spires, sliding steeply into narrow khors. Below the precipice which dropped sheer from the summit of one of the higher peaks, 4,000 or 5,000 feet above the wady below, an old ibex was feeding. The sun was not yet up, and he seemed but a grey shadow in the gloom of the hills. That he was old could be seen by the worn smoothness of the ridges of

his horns, which curved outwards and backwards over his sturdy shoulders. His knees, too, were worn and calloused, and above one eye the scalp had been torn in a fight with another ibex.

A few hundred yards from where he fed another male was trying to find his morning meal in the company of a small band of ewes. It was a mystery to know what they could pick up on that bare hillside, and still more when and where they found water, though at times their footprints could be seen in the dry sand at the foot of the hills. A yellow-headed vulture swept on noiseless black-tipped wings above them.

On the tops the mist still lay, its upper edge straight and heavy against the lighter sky, its lower torn and carded by the sharp-pointed crags into wisps of shredded cotton-wool. Here it seemed scarcely to stir; there rolled sluggishly into the depths of some gloomy chasm. So grey and lifeless did the whole prospect appear, the only movements the silent circling of the vulture and the sullen drift of the mist, that it seemed unreal, the figment of some great poet's sombre imaginings. In such awful surroundings the souls of the lost might wander for ever amid those lonely crags, expiating with the bitterness of remorse the sins of which they had been guilty in some fairer clime.

Then on a sudden the whole world seemed to stir. There came a wakening movement

among the hills and the sun rose on another day. In the wady the shadows still clustered thickly. The tamarisk trees and tufts of yellow grass, even the sparse bushes higher up the hillside, held no colour and differed but little in tone from the rocks which gave them so precarious a hold. The wady widened where a narrow gorge crept furtively into the hills, and here small rings of stones, each circled by a larger ring topped with white rocks, marked the resting-places of those who slept with their fathers. Three camels, with their mincing, supercilious gait, padded softly past. They were too far off for the ibex to betray any interest in their movements, and these fed on unconcernedly as the sun rose higher. Near the graves the camels stopped and, in the disjointed and unexpected manner of their kind, lay down. Dismounting, we moved silently up the gorge, and for an hour climbed and struggled amid the huge boulders and frowning precipices which barred our upward progress.

Presently, having reached a spur which commanded a wide view of the corrie stretching beyond, we halted. The khor twisted 100 feet below, rounded a sharp corner, and climbed the hill behind some projecting rocks. To the right a slide of shale and rubble drove down beneath the high sharp pinnacles of rock whose tops glowed red and yellow in the increasing warmth of the sun. Pinnacle topped pinnacle

as though arranged by some giant hand; whilst in places so symmetrically and in such ordered rows were the tiers of rock disposed that it seemed they had been set there by some human agency, and not the vast and immeasurable forces of nature.

As the sun grew stronger the old ibex, having eaten his fill, lay down; the others almost at the same moment followed his example, and peace settled down upon the mountains.

It was over an hour later that the tinkle of a stone falling among the rocks caused one of the ewes to raise her head and gaze intently at the spot whence the sound had come. Her stare revealed nothing, and soon she fell to dozing again. There were but few shadows at the foot of the hill when a second stone fell clattering above the ewe and brought her to her feet. The others raised their heads, watching, but the old ibex from where he lay could see no movement and the sound had not disturbed him. Though no further stones fell, the ewe was palpably uneasy, and continued to stare intently up the hillside. Presently she stamped her foot, and the others rose, following the direction of her gaze. As they did so a long-drawn cry shattered the stillness and broke and re-echoed among the rocks. It was taken up, flung back and tossed from peak to peak in falling cadences as the now thoroughly startled animals dashed down the hillside. The old ibex, roused at last, followed their headlong rush.

The ewe which had first given the alarm led them. Straight across the corrie, swerving upward, she went, while the cries and yells behind her redoubled.

She made for a narrow pass which led through a cleft in the rocks, and up which it seemed that no living thing could find foothold. As she neared it a cataract of stones poured down from the tops commanding it. Clouds of dust and fine splintered rock filled the air, and to us who watched it seemed that the hillside was on fire and that the lines, "Touch the mountains and they shall smoke," were becoming true before our very eyes.

Deafened by the crash and roar, the long-drawn cries which menaced them from three sides, bewildered by the puffs of splintered rock which sprang as though at the touch of invisible fingers wherever a boulder struck, the ibex made for the one side which seemed open to them, and, led by the ewe, turned at right angles to their previous course. From rock to rock they sprang, along ledges which seemed sheer, across gaps which seemed impassable. Poised for a moment on a point needle-like in sharpness, they seemed to float rather than leap to the next landing-place.

The turn downhill had given the old ibex the lead some distance ahead of the others, and as he reached a crest he paused. Silhouetted against the skyline, very grand he looked. His

curving horns, thrown into sharp relief, appeared enormous; the vision of them, as he leaped down among the rocks, all too fleeting. Vanishing, he reappeared, vanished again, and came into view almost opposite the point where we lay.

Again he paused. At the same moment, on the hillside above, the other ibex came into view. Turning, he moved slowly down the ravine beneath the slope of shale.

The hillside was in an uproar. It was impossible to tell from whence the cries and yells which filled the air came. Echoes seemed real; realities, echoes. Rocks thundered and crashed in all directions. On every peak appeared a figure, minute as though seen through the wrong end of a telescope. Paying no attention to the pandemonium which raged around him, the figures which seemed to encircle him, the avalanches of rock which threatened to overwhelm him, or the cries which rang in his ears, the old ibex, appearing to my despairing eyes to grow smaller and smaller every moment, made steadily forward with an occasional, it seemed a calculated, pause.

The last he made upon a shelving rock, beneath a cliff rose-red and menacing. It was his undoing. A sharp crack and a roar filled the hills, silencing every other sound. He stumbled and almost fell, then disappeared from sight. A friendly bush hid him, sprung apparently from the rock itself. As he stood there a movement

among the rocks opposite caught his eye, and with a desperate effort he struggled on. Thunder filled his ears. He stumbled, swayed on the ledge which held him, then crashed blindly on to the rocks far below.

Though in no sense a record, he carried a nice head, the horns measuring 39 inches. The record is 47 inches. Ibex suffer a good deal of persecution, and this there seems no method of stopping. It is a pity that native shikaris cannot be licensed as such, and at any rate made responsible that heads below a certain measurement are not killed. I saw some miserable specimens brought in by one party.

Having got my ibex, I returned to Port Sudan as quickly as I could. From here I travelled to Khartoum. No one who has made this journey is likely to forget it. The trains are the best, without exception, in which I have ever been; the food and attention beyond criticism. At Khartoum I was welcomed by Brock and Charles, who was coming with me to the Dinder. A charming companion, nothing ruffled the evenness of his temper, and we never had a single disagreement during the whole of the six weeks we were together. I give him the full credit.

On the evening following my arrival Brock was giving a dance in the gardens of the Zoo. After the three weeks which I had spent entirely alone with nature, this re-entry into the civilised

world was not unwelcome. It was quite the prettiest dance at which I have ever been present. The warm scented night, with no danger of its being spoiled by cold winds or rain; the groups of people, among whom gazelles and antelopes walked unafraid; the playing fountains; the throbbing music of the band pervading the air; the native servants in spotless white; the bright dresses of the ladies; one's own sense of fitness, all combined to make it a memorable evening.

The following day I visited Omdurman, and was shown over the house of the Khalifa by an old man who had lived there with him and had fought in the battle. As a boy I used to know Colonel Martin, who had led the charge of the 21st Lancers armed with a riding-cane. It all seemed very long ago.

Early the next morning Charles and I left by train for Makwar, and on February 3 reached Singa, having crossed the Sennar Dam. This is a wonderful piece of engineering, and good fishing is to be had here. From Singa we travelled by lorry to Abou Hashim, where we picked up our "hamleh" and my shikari, El Nur Ibrahim. A first-class hunter, he produced a wonderful recommendation from Brock which he thoroughly deserved.

The first few days of trekking are always a little difficult. Unexpected obstacles crop up; there are disputes among the men; the cook

never has everything he wants; and it is apparently quite impossible for the camels to complete the day's journey on which you have determined. However, these troubles are soon smoothed over and, as in our case, everything settles down into a comparatively regular routine.

Before leaving England I had been given a beautiful little ·22 H.V. double-barrelled rifle. With this weapon I had in the Red Sea hills shot one or two gazelle. Walter Winans used to shoot the running deer at Bisley with one exactly similar. For game, I came to the conclusion that the bore was too small. I killed an ariel, a fairly big animal, stone dead, but very accurate shooting has to be made and the bullet placed in exactly the right spot. On another occasion I came across an ariel with a good head standing in the river bed. The stalk was an easy one to within 120 yards, and at this distance I fired. The animal never moved, and I fired again. He jumped, walked forward, and stood again. I fired nine shots without being able to make out clearly where he was hit. He then lay down, and I killed him with a final shot from my ·350. On going up to him I found nine bullet holes all on the shoulder or thereabouts, but not one had actually penetrated the heart. I only mention this to show the danger of using too small a bore. Had this beast been in bush country I might easily have lost him



PLATE II.—A GOOD WATERBUCK: SUDAN.

altogether. After this experience I never used the ·22 again.

A day or two after leaving Abou Hashim we came across roan, water-buck, reed-buck, and large herds of ariel.

Shooting in the type of country where we were is not easy. It is rarely that you can sit down with your elbows on your knees (by far the best position when it is possible) and take a steady shot. Long grass usually obscures your view of the target, and the majority of shots have to be taken off the shoulder.

The first animal of any importance which I got was a very fine water-buck, standing near the edge of the bush, partially hidden by long grass. He carried a beautiful head, measuring almost exactly 32 inches in length, with a similar measurement between the tips of the horns. Later I killed another just under 30 inches with a tip-to-tip measurement of 34 inches. The best Uganda horns of the Defassa variety, to which these belonged, are as a rule longer, but I have seldom seen a better balanced head than the first one I got. Wide span adds greatly to the appearance of a head of this type.

Another fine animal is the roan antelope. The best heads from the Sudan run to about 34 inches. I killed only one, with a length of 29 inches. He was an old bull, and I was well content. He had had, apparently, an encounter with a lion, for his neck was badly scarred. The

horns of the roan—Abou Uruf, Father of the Mane—are disappointing compared to the size of the animal, and I had no wish to destroy a handsome beast for the sake of a few extra inches of horn. I saw plenty more, but none with a head much better.

We had great fun with guinea-fowl, which provided a welcome addition to the menu. If found near the banks of the river, which in some places were steep, we managed some quite sporting shots with the aid of our retainers. Made into soup, which we hung in bottles wrapped in wet cloths, these birds provided a very refreshing drink.

At Beit el Wahash we saw our first elephant. Standing on the edge of a swamp spraying himself with water, in the short dusk of the African night he was a wonderful sight.

I used rather to like elephants. They looked big and friendly, massive and unchanging in a petty and changing world. Not the Zoo elephants; they, poor brutes, appear merely ridiculous or rather pathetic with a lot of children sitting on their backs spitting stones out of a bag or munching sponge cake. I mean wild ones, walking about in their natural surroundings, their back-views looking like those of a pantomime elephant enormously magnified and their front-views—well, I am going to tell you about their front-views. It was the front-view of an elephant that made me alter my

views. I am not quite sure that I like them, and I am quite sure that I no longer think them benevolent.

The Sudan elephants are very big, at least in that part of the Sudan which I visited. Unfortunately their tusks are small. Very few large tusks have been got in recent years, and I had no desire to shoot a beast which had taken years to reach maturity for the sake of some very indifferent ivory. Charles, however, wanted to take a photograph.

We had just been having a mild encounter with a herd of buffalo. By "mild" I mean that, very hot, perspiring freely, and a little dubious, we had got to the foot of a low rise which stood out from the 8-foot-high elephant grass. Charles had more or less successfully photographed three astonished-looking cows whose heads had appeared over the top of the rise. They had not seemed unduly perturbed, and, the sitting over, with two or three explosive snorts had lumbered heavily off, taking the herd, numbering about sixty, with them. They crossed a swamp through which it was difficult for us to follow, and after resting for some time in the shade of a few trees a quarter of a mile distant had moved quietly off, leaving us to our own devices.

We went leisurely on through fairly open park-like country covered with scattered trees until we reached a spot where a peninsula of bush and large trees ran out into a swamp. Here and

there were dom palms rising above the surrounding bush.

We sat in what little shade there was and discussed the buffalo. It was then that the donkey boy ran up grinning from ear to ear, and announced that he had seen two "fils." The first, sometimes the only, words that the indifferent linguist picks up when engaged on a hunting trip are the names of animals. I cannot talk Arabic, but I did know that "fils" meant elephant.

We had seen traces of them, large circular holes sunk regularly in the ground and equally spaced, and had at first wondered, until we realised that these were gigantic footprints made when the ground was soft in the rainy season. They varied from 18 inches to 3 feet in depth and 2 feet and more in diameter. Some were even larger. These were the only evidence of the presence of elephants until the one we had seen at Beit el Wahash.

In a spirit of light-hearted optimism we set forth, Charles and I, with the two shikaris, El Nur and Bakit. Ibrahim, one of the boys, had a shot-gun and I carried the heavy rifle. Almost at once El Nur pointed excitedly, and we saw a large grey mass swing from behind a tree. The elephant, for it was he, moved across our front, looking the picture of perambulating benevolence. We cut in behind him and moved along parallel with the course he was taking, never

getting a clear view of his whole body, but bits of back, legs, and ears. He was about 30 yards off, quite unconscious of our presence, and giving an easy shot had I meant to kill him. Presently he stopped and proceeded to shake the stem of a dom palm. He seemed to me to be putting a certain amount of vicious intensity into the performance. I was beginning to feel a little less casual than when we had started. We were by this time about 15 yards from him. He continued to shake the palm tree with great energy, and Charles, just in front of me, peered round a clump of high grass.

"I can see him beautifully," he announced. I received this information with somewhat tepid enthusiasm, while anxiously watching the top of the palm tree, which was shaking like a straw in a gale.

Charles proceeded to set his camera and peered round the grass again.

"He fills the whole of the view-finder!" was the next bulletin.

"Well, buck up!" I hissed, liking the look of the palm tree less than ever. I expected the whole thing to come down on top of me at any minute.

"Isn't this fun?" grinned Charles, fiddling about with his camera.

I raised my head to look at the palm and found to my astonishment that it was absolutely still. Not a leaf stirred. Their harsh rustle no longer came to my ears. I peered through the grass.

I could see a bit of grey body. The elephant was still there, standing absolutely motionless. What had happened? Next second I knew. I felt a faint, a very faint breath of wind on the back of my neck.

"Look out!" I whispered to Charles in a hoarse undertone. "The wind's changed."

Charles was endeavouring to bring his camera into action again, but at this he stopped and raised his head.

Over the top of the grass, quite noiselessly, appeared two enormous ears. The next second the stillness was split by a sound which seemed to me to have come from the largest siren of the largest battleship ever constructed by man. In it there was an under-note of rage which no siren that I ever encountered could have achieved. The next second I was aware of an enormous bulk hurling itself at me.

At moments such as this one must act instantly; yet in that instant I managed to my surprise, looking back on it afterwards, to do quite a lot of thinking.

The first thing I thought was, "Shall I shoot?" I was vaguely aware of El Nur shouting, "Shoot!" but all I could see over the tops of the bushes and grass were those two colossal ears and a bulging bit of trunk. "If I shoot," I thought to myself, "I shall probably blow a piece of his face away, as I can't see a vital spot. This may or may not turn him, but will in any



PLATE 12.—THE ELEPHANT THAT CHASED US.

case make him more annoyed than he is at present. If I hit him I shall have to follow him up and kill him, and the last thing in the world I want at the present moment is an encounter with a wounded bull elephant. As I am not going to shoot I had better decamp as swiftly as possible."

I heard someone shout "Imshi"; Bakit ran past me; El Nur vanished; Charles dived to the right; and as I turned and ran I saw Ibrahim, well ahead, going faster than I have ever seen a native run in my life. There came more siren squeals from behind me mingled with the crashing of branches and the breaking of trees. The ground was fairly open and flat. I did not feel frightened, but in a vaguely sub-conscious way wondered if he would catch me. I was making very good going, but the crashing and squealing was still going on behind, and I looked back, determined, if I saw the elephant, to try and turn him with a shot. I could see nothing, though I could still hear him. Ibrahim was going strong, and I saw no good reason for failing to follow his example. After another 200 yards I slowed down, and then, as all was quiet, stopped. Presently El Nur limped up, followed at intervals by Bakit and Charles. The former had dived into a bush, and the branch of a tree smashed by the elephant's headlong rush had crashed down on to his arm, giving him a severe bruise. Ibrahim had dropped the gun,

cracking its stock, and had twisted his ankle, but there the casualties ended.

The reaction after a sudden strain of this kind is interesting to note. For no apparent reason that I could see I yawned incessantly for the next three-quarters of an hour. El Nur was very angry with me for not firing, and shook hands warmly with Charles at the reunion in the most pointed manner, entirely ignoring me.

I have often discussed the matter since with friends of mine, some of them experienced elephant hunters. I am glad to say that they all, while pointing out the extreme idiocy of having got into such a position, agreed that I acted rightly in not shooting.

Meanwhile, as they used to say in the movies, the cause of all the trouble, after chasing us for about 200 yards, had retired behind an ant-heap, where he waited until the "hamleh" came past later in the morning. He then rushed upon them, giving once again his well-known imitation of a battleship siren. I was glad, when it was described to me on our return to camp, that I had not, on this occasion, been one of the audience. The "hamleh," terrified as its members were, yet welcomed the opportunity of, for once, being able unchecked to make as much noise as they liked. Bursting into loud yells and shouts, they beat every tin utensil available and succeeded in turning their aggressor, who retreated into the bush and was

no more seen. I did not envy the next person he encountered.

People often say to me: "You've travelled a lot; you must have had some very exciting adventures."

When I tell them the narrowest escape I ever had was being nearly killed by a bus in Piccadilly they lose all interest.

Now I shall be able to tell them that I was charged by an elephant!

I have mentioned an encounter with buffalo. Such meetings are never lacking in excitement, for you never quite know what will be the outcome. However, on this occasion everything passed off quietly. I know one man who was less fortunate. A buffalo charged and tossed him. After his recovery it became necessary to obtain a medical certificate stating that he was unfit to return to duty. The medical officer had been called away and had left a native assistant in charge. He supplied the certificate as follows: "I, Chunder Dass, hereby certify that Captain B—— is unfit to return to duty, having been punctured behind by some blunt instrument."

One afternoon we left camp about four o'clock and crossed the wady, where we encountered a fine bull giraffe. I had no wish to shoot one of these beautiful, harmless creatures, even had they not been on the protected list. A little later we came on a Tora hartebeest, but he was in thick bush and gave no chance before he moved off.

It was getting late when we emerged on a large open space covered with high grass on which grazed a herd of buffalo. El Nur, who had not much use for game other than elephant, buffalo, or lion, in a state of great delight proceeded to stalk them, and got to within 100 yards. Their heads were hidden, but on their backs, showing above the high grass, were the white egrets by which these animals are usually accompanied. The crawl through the long bamboo grass, which required a good deal of negotiating, the wiry stems lying at all angles, had rendered me very hot and my glasses were covered with steam. I wonder if those with good sight realise their good fortune on occasions of this kind. To put up your rifle and to find that through the misty haze you can see nothing, while large drops of moisture run down your spectacles, effectively blurring the little you can see, is a severe trial of patience. As the buffalo were steadily advancing and I had no wish to shoot an animal whose fate I should afterwards regret, much to El Nur's disgust I began slowly to retreat. A cow was feeding within 40 yards, and the light at 6 p.m. was growing very bad. The herd, about eighty in number, continued to advance. The cow, her suspicions at last aroused, snorted loudly. All their heads went up. To her left I could see what looked like a big beast. El Nur whispered, " Kebeir ! Kebeir !" So, aiming at his chest, I was relieved to hear that loud

smack which betokens a hit. Falling on his knees, the bull, for a bull it was, recovered himself, and, rising, followed the herd, which was charging off in a cloud of dust. After going a little way he drew apart and stood looking back, his head up. I fired again with the ·465 lent me by Brock, which had been given to him by Selous. There was another loud smack, and he moved off into the long grass, 10 feet high. Cautiously approaching, we made out his form lying among the broken stems. When we got up to him he was quite dead. An old bull, he carried a good head for this part of the Sudan. It was entirely owing to El Nur that I got him, as in the bad light I should never have been able to distinguish the size of his horns.

Returning to camp, in the dark we ran right into another lot of buffalo, who were within 30 yards of us before a shot in the air from the 12-bore caused them to move off.

We had come across a good deal of lion spoor in the dry river bed, and found one day in the long grass on the bank above the dead body of a water-buck. Considerably cheered by this welcome sight, we decided to remain in the place where we were then camped, and devote all our time in an endeavour to find the animals responsible.

There are some things which you can only do once in this life, however long it may be, and to kill your first lion is one of them. Attempts

are frequently made to dethrone him, but in spite of these he still remains, in popular imagination at any rate, the king of beasts. An aura of romance surrounds him which no other animal possesses.

Some animals may be more dangerous to pursue—the elephant, the buffalo, or the leopard —opinions varying with the experience of the individual, but to the death of a lion, particularly one's first, there is attached a thrill which can never be repeated.

Sitting here looking out of the window I can see the snow-covered lawn, streaked with blue shadows from the bare, twisted boughs of the trees. The gale which is humming through their tops throws them into fantastic designs. A disconsolate blackbird is hopping aimlessly about on the fringe of dirty-looking grass which shows where the snow has melted. Rose-bushes, ragged and forlorn, peer through the white drifts. It all looks very cold and miserable, and for that reason, I suppose, my mind goes back the more insistently to that day on the banks of the Dinder.

A lion was what I wanted to get above all else. Years ago in Kenya I had seen them. One had walked in the darkness round the outside of my tent within a foot of where I lay; but a shot at one had never been my luck. There were plenty in Kenya in those days, though men who had been in the country for years had never even seen one. Others on a short visit killed

several. There is always a good deal of luck about lions, however experienced a hunter may be.

We had found their tracks; we had found their kill; and

> " When the moon rose, and her crescent white
> Made the woods blacker, then from either shore
> We heard the thundering of the lions' roar,
> Now coming nigher, dying now away."

I used to love lying on my camp bed listening to the sound which never failed to wake me. " There is no sound which issues from the throat of any creature to compare with that of the lion's voice," writes Sir Alfred Pease in his fascinating " Book of the Lion," and I agree with him. Cold printed words give no idea of the impression which it imparts; nor does the pale simulacrum one may hear at feeding-time in the Zoo, " though the air vibrates and the sound comes thundering out of the depths of their insides." It is like hearing a scratched gramophone record of some famous singer after listening to the actual voice. In Africa the very ground itself seems to shake; awe descends on every living thing when the king announces his coming.

It was on February 20 that I told Osman my bed was coming unstitched, and that it would shortly disintegrate. Sure enough at about 2.30 a.m. it did, and I spent the rest of the night, not in the best of tempers, with my head

and feet in or on the bed and the rest of my anatomy on the ground. Consequently, I did not feel any great aversion to rising with the first streaks of dawn.

Our way lay along the river bank. Pools of varying size showed below the trees and bushes which fringed it. At first all was grey and uniform, but as the dawn grew brighter colour began to make itself felt, though there is but little colour in the Sudan. A few ariel flitted like shadows at our approach, and beyond them reed-buck, water-buck, and roan. Presently across the wide expanse of the river bed we saw figures moving. They turned out to be a young officer, H., on his way down to the Abyssinian border, and two native soldiers, fine, smart-looking men. He, too, was after lion, and after a short talk we separated. A long walk, during which I saw nothing I wanted to shoot, followed. The game was scattered, as, owing to the previous season being very wet, every maya or swamp was full. Consequently animals did not have to come to the river in order to get water, and were not nearly so localised as would otherwise have been the case. Some of these mayas were very beautiful, full of bird life, with water-buck and gazelle feeding round their edges.

It was very near the spot where I had first met him that I suddenly saw H., accompanied by his satellites, running towards me along the

top of the river bank. He made a gesture of annoyance as he caught sight of us, nor did I wonder when I heard the reason. Just below the bank was a narrow pool some 50 yards long. Not three minutes before our unwelcome advent he had caught sight of a lion and lioness drinking at its edge. They had dashed up the bank, and must have passed within a few yards of us in the long grass. He took our arrival extremely well, and as they could not have gone far, suggested that we should endeavour to drive them out of the long grass. We accordingly drew lots for position, and waited to see the result. One of the soldiers saw the lioness poke her head out on the edge of the grass close to where I was standing, but she hastily withdrew and we saw neither.

Shooting a good reed-buck on the way, I returned to camp, where we held a council of war, and decided to move higher up the river and to try for these lions again. I was glad to hear later that H. had succeeded in getting one elsewhere.

Our next camp was close to a huge baobab tree, and I again spent a bad night, as we were invaded by an army of ants, which somehow managed to crawl under our nets and covered our bedding, our beds, and ourselves before we discovered their presence.

Some baboons played in the river bed, which stretched in a wide sweep just below the bank on which the camp was situated, and as we started

in the afternoon marabout storks wandered off across the dry sand. Walking together, with hunched shoulders, they always reminded me of old club roués telling each other in raucous undertones salacious stories, and full of vain regrets that they were no longer able to indulge in the excesses of their misspent youth. A large island full of little bays and creeks of sand rose above the river bed. The grass had been burnt, and by the time we had explored its length we were all blackened from the charred stems. Crocodiles made sullen dives into the pools at whose edges they had been basking, but much as I love shooting a crocodile, we left them undisturbed.

Just after seeing two oribi in a charming little green glade which the fire had spared we came out into the bare expanse of sand which I had got to know so well. There were a good many lion tracks showing, and in the shadow of the bank El Nur motioned me to sit. The opposite bank was a good 200 yards off, some 15 feet high, and with a shallow pool stretching below it.

For some time we sat there smoking quietly. It was very still, and I revelled in the warmth and wondered when it would indeed be my luck to see a lion. There was a fly which annoyed me, and I kept striking at it with my hand.

Suddenly one of the shikaris muttered something. I felt El Nur pull at my rifle and say, "Shoot!"

I looked across at the far bank. Something big and yellow in the last dying rays of the sun flashed over its edge. Then El Nur whispered, " Etnen !" (Two !) A second great yellow form, bigger even at that distance than the first, followed.

I thought, " They're lions. I must take the second. The first was the lioness." He was crouching at the bottom of the bank above the pool, three-quarters on, facing me. I thought again, " I mustn't miss. It's a lion !" and cuddled down to the rifle. He fell over and lay growling in the mud. The lioness raised her head and stood gazing. The shot struck the bank just over her back, and in a second she was up it and out of sight. But the lion lay there. We went cautiously across to him. I fired again and struck him in the chest, but still he lived, and another shot went through his forearm lying across his chest. Then it was that I realised how even hunters of experience have been killed by wounded lions. He raised his head, which I had thought incapable of movement, and with a savage snarl gripped the forearm in his teeth. For a few seconds he growled and tore at it, and then lay still; but in those few seconds he could have done a man to death.

El Nur said he was twenty, and certainly he was a big full-grown lion in good condition. He had no mane—very few lions in the Sudan have (the finest maned lion I have ever seen is

in the Zoo in Edinburgh); but he was the first lion I had ever killed, and for this alone I cherish the recollection of that evening more than that of any other.

I was very lucky. Apart from the distance, I was in an ideal position, sitting comfortably and shooting off my knees; I was not perspiring, always an added handicap to those who have to wear glasses; the light was quite good; I had an unrestricted field of fire if anything had gone wrong; and last, but not least, there was a large pool of water between me and the lion !

Looking back, the things which struck me most were the bright, blazing gold of the two as they came over the bank; the very much larger size of the lion as compared with his mate; and the ease and speed with which they negotiated the 15-foot bank, especially the rapidity with which the lioness disappeared after the shot.

There is a verse in Proverbs which reads: " The slothful man saith, There is a lion without; I shall be slain in the streets." I wish he would say it now.

CHAPTER XI • THE PRESERVATION OF BIG GAME

THERE are various ways in which those of us who cannot afford an expedition in search of big game, but who wish to acquire a knowledge of wild life, can do so. We may look at pictures and read of the conditions under which such game exists; we can visit museums and examine mounted specimens; we can go to zoological gardens; or we can, if we are fortunate, watch animals in a game reserve or national park under entirely natural conditions. Such parks are now established in the United States of America, in Canada, and in certain parts of Africa.

Good pictures, whether photographs or drawings, give a better idea of what a wild animal really looks like than does a badly mounted specimen. The latter, if set up by an artist at his job, is in some ways preferable to a picture, however good such may be. This is obvious. Both these methods are inferior compared to a view of the living animal, even though it is in captivity. An animal behind bars is, however,

a very different creature to one living under natural conditions amid surroundings of its own choosing. It follows, therefore, that the only really satisfactory way in which we, or succeeding generations, can enjoy to the greatest advantage the remnants of the wild life which we have inherited, and which we hold in trust, is by the establishment on a proper basis of national parks. This does not connote the abolition of zoological gardens. These are valuable institutions which enable the dweller in the city to gratify a deeply rooted instinct. Many such gardens, no doubt, stand in need of revision, but the conditions under which captive animals now exist have improved to a vast extent in recent years.

At one time and another I have visited a number of zoos. By far the best I have seen was that created by Carl Hagenbeck at Stellingen. All such places ought to be organised on the lines laid down by this great man.

So far as was possible bars were eliminated and the animals could be seen, taking into consideration the confined space, in a natural state. Hagenbeck has been described as "a business man with a strong spirit of adventure." No one but a good man of business could have undertaken successfully schemes whose failure must have resulted in heavy loss. To none but an adventurous spirit would such schemes have occurred. A pioneer in the proper handling of

wild animals, he was, too, a naturalist with a genuine sympathy and love for them, qualities inherited by his sons.

He wrote: "Above all I desired to give the animals the maximum of liberty. I wished to exhibit them, not as captives, confined within narrow spaces and looked at between bars, but as free to wander from place to place within as large limits as possible, and with no bars to obstruct the view and serve as a reminder of their captivity. I desired to refute the prevailing notions that luxurious and expensive houses with complicated heating apparatus were necessary for keeping animals alive and healthy. I hoped to show that far better results could be obtained when they were kept in the fresh air and allowed to grow accustomed to the climate. I wished my new park to be a great and enduring example of the benefit that can be wrought by giving the animals as much freedom and placing them in as natural an environment as possible."

All this he accomplished and, apart from the freedom given to the animals, much of his success lay in gradually accustoming the various species to their new surroundings. It was no unusual sight during the winter months to see lions, ostriches, gazelles, antelopes, and other African species walking about in the snow and none the worse for the experience.

The whole point of the combination of rockwork and trenches at Stellingen was the abolition

of bars, and in a secondary degree the obliteration of unsightly features in the surroundings.

The Mappin Terraces in Regent's Park are an attempt to follow out these principles. The London atmosphere is ill suited to the maintenance of animals from warmer climates, and it is a tribute to those in charge that they thrive as well as they do.

Unfortunately in times such as these it is difficult to raise money for many deserving objects, including amongst others the proper establishment and upkeep of zoological gardens. Were money forthcoming in sufficient quantities, those in Edinburgh could be made as good as any. The extremes of heat and cold are not so great as those at either Stellingen or New York, and the site at Corstorphine, embracing incidentally beautiful views, is admirable.

Another very good zoo, though small, was that at Antwerp. During the war a writer in the *Field* described how painfully a visit there affected him. Owing to the danger which might have arisen through the escape of the carnivora during a German bombardment it was decided that these must be destroyed. The writer of the article had a talk with the director of the gardens and the keeper who had been deputed to kill the animals. "They both choked with sorrow as they talked." He had the mournful experience of seeing four splendid lions lying in an open grave. Whether these gardens have

been re-established I am unaware; nor do I know how Stellingen has fared since 1918.

Zoological gardens are, I think, valuable as a means of creating a healthy public opinion, and on this factor the permanent preservation of wild game primarily depends. They are not, obviously, however skilfully laid out, to be compared with national parks of vast extent as a means of exhibiting wild life.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, the necessity for the creation of national parks in this connection does not apply to these islands. We possess no large fauna which is in imminent danger of extinction.

Elsewhere it is different.

The natural fauna of any country is bound to disappear before the advance of civilisation. This is now recognised, and we have international conferences to determine the best methods to be employed for the preservation of the remnants of those vast herds of game which delighted the eyes of those who came before us.

In this connection America may be said to have taken the lead by the establishment of the Yellowstone National Park in 1872. Sixty-two miles long, with a breadth of 54 miles, it embraces an area of 3,348 square miles. In " Stalks Abroad " I have written of it at length, but in order to show the difficulties which a generation ago confronted those who had at heart the preservation of wild life I will quote

Dr. W. T. Hornaday, the director of the New York Zoological Park. To him, more than to anyone else, is due the preservation of one species, the bison of America.

" The history of the wild game of the Yellowstone Park is blackened by two occurrences and one existing fact. The fact is the town of Gardiner situated on the northern boundary of the Park, in the State of Montana. In Gardiner there are a number of men armed with rifles who towards game have the grey-wolf quality of mercy." (This was written many years ago.)

The first stain is the massacre of 270 wild bison for their heads and robes. They were slaughtered by poachers in 1890-1893 owing to an inadequate protective force and the, then, utterly deficient game laws.

The second blot is the equally savage slaughter in the early winter of 1911 by some of the people of Gardiner, reinforced by so-called sportsmen from other parts of the States, of all the Park wapiti they could get at, regardless of age or sex, which had wandered across the line into the shambles of Gardiner. Something like 2,500 were killed. That such a slaughter was possible even twenty years ago in the United States will surprise no one who has studied matters connected with the preservation of game throughout the world. It is a deplorable but perfectly true statement that, were it not for the efforts of Dr. Hornaday and such men as those who are at

present on the American Committee for International Wild Life Protection, and our own Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, big game, not only in America, but all over the world, save in the wildest and most inaccessible parts, would cease to exist. The governor of a district belonging to the United States Government, discussing game preservation, is stated to have remarked: "The preservation of the game should be left to the people inhabiting this district. They will preserve it all right." Experience has shown that such people look upon the game as their own to do with what they like, and their predilections are almost invariably for slaughter.

In America, "so far as it is possible to judge, the war made no appreciable difference in the amount of game killed during that period." The number of hunting licences taken out since 1918, however, is much larger than before. In Pennsylvania alone, to take one example, 400,000 were issued in one year. Game in this state seems to be well protected, for, owing to the increase in the number of black bears, some of the regulations were relaxed, and two years ago 900 of these animals were killed. At least twelve States have created game sanctuaries of recent years. Federal courts, in which there is no "pull," have done much to protect game as opposed to local courts, and State game laws are beginning to conform in all essential details

with Federal regulations. The limit of game which may be killed is in most cases too high, open seasons are too long, and hunting licences are too cheap. It is the "sport"—detestable word for a detestable creature—who in America or any other country does the greatest amount of harm to game. It is he who considers that he has not obtained his "rights" unless he has murdered up to his limit, and who, if his licence permits the killing of four animals, will see that four animals are killed, though he may have been fortunate in securing a record with his first.

It is so easy to destroy and so impossible to create. Man, with all his mechanical inventions and ingenuity, can never restore to life a single individual of all the millions which have been destroyed. A land teeming with game can be reduced to a wilderness in a few short years: centuries will not give it back its pristine glories. Wild life a hundred years ago was nowhere so generously nor so widely distributed as in North America. Mr. Owen Wister, the author of the most delightful book on "The West" ever written, has remarked: "One cannot expect Englishmen to care whether American big game is exterminated or not; that Americans should not is a disgrace." Englishmen do care; but it is only the Americans who can save it.

The bison, the wapiti, and the prong-horn had very nearly gone; the sheep, the goat, and other species of deer will follow unless—and the signs

are that it will—American public opinion steps in and prevents it. The ethics of the American sportsman, witness the code of the Camp Fire Club of America, are identical with those which we uphold. It is the crass, selfish stupidity of the democratic "sport" which stands in the way, coupled with the apathy of those who care nothing for the extermination of anything so long as they themselves are left in peace.

To men like the late Theodore Roosevelt, Dr. W. T. Hornaday, Mr. Henry Fairfield Osborn, Mr. Madison Grant, to name but four, the sportsmen of America owe a debt best repaid by carrying out the principles of game protection which they have enunciated.

Now, to turn elsewhere.

Ten years ago a prominent lecturer on big game gave it as his opinion that in twenty years' time, or even less, the game in that part of Africa with which he was dealing in his lecture would have been utterly swept away by the hand of man. Half that period has elapsed. The position today, owing in part to the growth of a more healthy public feeling, may possibly be regarded with less apprehension. The danger has, however, by no means passed.

It should always be remembered that a lost species can never be replaced.

I do not propose to enter into the question of game preservation in Asia. It is too vast and complicated a subject to discuss here. In coun-

tries and districts which we control the game so far as is possible is preserved. That is all one can say.

Africa is in a different category, and here we have a responsibility which we should do well to recognise.

One fact stares in the face anyone who has studied the question. It is this. Only by the establishment of national parks is the permanent preservation of many species of African game ensured.

Attached to "African Game Protection" (1933), a special publication of the American Committee for International Wild Life Protection, is a map. The black areas are national sanctuaries for game; those shaded are complete, partial, or special game reserves. The distinction involved may not at first sight strike the observer. It is this. A game reserve has no permanence. It can be abolished by a stroke of the pen.

There are over a hundred game preservation areas set aside at the present moment in Africa. There are only five national parks. The Kruger National Park is by far the best known, and is "probably the most successful and interesting wild animal reserve in the world." Next in size is the Parc National Albert in the Kivu district of the Congo, established in 1925. Two other parks will eventually be established: Parc Leopold, near the northern boundary of the

Congo; and Parc Ruwenzori, adjoining the Congo-Uganda border. "These new regions are of especial interest, since they are the home of such rare mammals as the White rhinoceros, Okapi, Giant Derby eland, and Grays lechwe." (I was unaware that the last species was found here.) In addition to these already existing and contemplated parks there are three smaller ones in Cape Province.

The reserves, in distinction from parks, are:

1. Complete—*i.e.*, all game is protected at all times.

2. Temporary—all game is protected for part of the year.

3. Partial—all game is protected, except certain species.

4. Special—one given species only is protected.

Reserves "exist only in virtue of simple proclamations in the various Provincial Gazettes," and can be altered as to size and regulations by the Provincial Governors.

The Kruger National Park may be taken as an example of what a national park should be. It evolved from the Sabi game reserve, "the first wild life sanctuary on the African continent," which was proclaimed as such by the Transvaal Government in 1898. The original area of the Sabi and Shingwedsi Reserves comprised 14,000 square miles of game country. Of this, 5,000 square miles was, with the consent of the various gold-mining companies who

owned it, included in the reserve. It is now outside the Park, but a buffer strip 100 miles long by 50 miles wide is gradually being established between the settled country at the foot of the Drakensberg Mountains and the western boundary of the Park. The National Parks Act, it may be added, was passed by the South African Parliament in 1926.

For the administration of the Park a Board of Control is responsible. They have done their work well and are continually improving its condition. A new extension was opened to the public in 1933 to the north of the Letapa River. This contains elephant, eland, and impala.

"The Park was first opened to the public in 1928. In that year 200 motor-cars paid the entrance fee of £1 per vehicle. In 1929 the number rose to 800, and the following year 3,000 cars and lorries entered the area. There are some 500 miles of motor road, and eight rest camps at suitable intervals, each consisting of a number of concrete huts with conical thatch roofs. Light, fuel, hot and cold water, and attendance are provided, together with a bedstead, for 2s. 6d. a night per person; but food and bedding are extras. There are some regulations made with a view to preserving the Park and for the benefit of the public itself, such as not leaving one's vehicle except at the rest camps, and these rules have to be observed under penalty. The Park is rapidly becoming

the favourite holiday resort of all who possess cars of their own. In addition, special trains and bus tours from all parts of the Union carry visitors to the Park.

"What immediately strikes the visitor is the amazing tameness of all the animals, and the complete unconcern they display to passing motor-cars, lying close to the road and often not even troubling to get up when a car approaches. No shooting having taken place for nearly thirty years, the present generation of game animals knows nothing of firearms, but innate suspicion prompts them not to permit humans much nearer than 50 yards. However, neither game nor lions seem yet to associate the human element with the automobile, and thus a great field for both still and moving pictures is afforded by the confiding nature of all wild life.

"The number of large wild animals in the Park is hard to calculate, but has been variously estimated at from 500,000 to 3,000,000 head. The animal population (a year or two ago) was put at 100 elephants, 10 black rhinos, 250 giraffes, 200 hippos, 800 buffaloes, 400 to 500 adult lions, 120,000 antelopes (eland, inyala, kudu, roan, sable, wildebeest, water-buck, tsessebe, impala, reed-buck, bush-buck, klipspringer, duiker, steinbuck, oribi, etc.), and numerous zebras. The 'balance of nature' seems to be self-regulating; the numerous lions feed on the antelope, but the latter multiply fast enough to more than keep

up their numbers, though without the check of the carnivores they would doubtless soon overrun the Park.[1] The area is alive with birds of many varieties. The Park presents a vast variety of scenery, from the wild gorges where the six great rivers thread their way through the Limpopo Hills, to the open palm-dotted flats of the Sabi River. Away to the west, visible from all parts of the Park, tower the giant Drakensberg peaks."

This is what has been done in South Africa. It is good, but it could have been so much better at a quarter of the cost if the people of South Africa had awakened a little earlier to the danger of what they were losing.

The position in Kenya is better, because not yet has the game disappeared to the extent that it has done in the south. A hundred years ago the fauna of South Africa was almost as rich and varied as that of Kenya. It is fatally easy to destroy; the destruction of game accomplished, it is impossible to re-create.

Recommendations as to the establishment of national parks in Kenya have been made, and it is to be hoped that conflicting opinions may be reconciled and that such parks will eventually be developed. The formation of national parks is the last stage, though it should be the first, in the steps to be taken for the preservation of the large fauna.

[1] When lions become too numerous they are thinned out by the Park rangers.

The first step, when it becomes apparent that the game is in danger, is the framing of an efficient code of game laws.

Now it is the easiest thing in the world to lay down the principles on which game should be preserved; any intelligent person who had travelled and was gifted with ordinary common sense could do so. The difficulty lies in their enforcement.

The whole keynote of game preservation, to my mind, and I am glad to see that so distinguished and able an observer as Captain Keith Caldwell has expressed similar views, *lies in the prevention of killing for profit.*

We all have a fellow-feeling for the poacher, whether in this country or abroad, who poaches because he is a sportsman and cannot keep away from it. We have none for the organised gang who see in the destruction of wild life an easy way of making money, and ruthlessly slaughter wholesale with no regard for age or sex. So long as this type of offender considers that he *may* get away with it, and that if he is lucky enough to do so there is money in his pocket, so long will he continue to poach with unabated vigour. When he is certain that retribution swift and sure will follow on his heels, he takes to some less dangerous form of amusement.

The game laws now in force in Africa in those districts under British control are in the main excellent. " Game cannot, however," to quote Captain Caldwell, " be successfully preserved by

laws alone; public opinion must be behind them, otherwise the difficult task of the Game Department becomes an impossible one." The excellent article from which I quote, dealing with Kenya, appeared in the *Field*, and continues: "The colony's game laws are strict, even drastic. The underlying principle of the legislation is to preserve game as strictly as possible where it does no damage, and to allow it to be freely killed where it seriously conflicts with development."

Kenya, as Captain Caldwell points out, is in a fortunate position, since the people of Kenya realise that the game is an asset and intend to keep it.

The greatest factors in the destruction of game are native hunters, though settlers, traders, the motor-car, and even the aeroplane, all play a part.

In Kenya the sale of game trophies and game meat is prohibited, save with the permission of the Game Warden. This makes it almost impossible for the game profiteer to do business, and *this ordinance should be the first to appear in any code of game laws.* It goes to the root of game preservation. In Kenya the onus of proof is upon the person charged. He must prove that he is innocent.

"Illegal killing by Europeans on a scale that counts," to quote Captain Caldwell once more, "has almost disappeared, though minor breaches

of the law are doubtless frequent, made easy to perpetrate, thanks to the motor-car. Illegal killing by the natives, on the other hand, is a really difficult thing to compete with. In spite of all that the Game Department can do, this goes steadily on. In the huge bush and desert areas of the colony it is seldom possible to catch the actual poachers. . . . It is not what the hunter kills for his own consumption that matters, but what he *kills to sell* that does the damage."

Again, although efficient game laws may be framed and enforced within a given area, over the march is a neighbour to whom the destruction of game is not only a matter of indifference but a source of profit. Here the poacher has his chance. Raids into the controlled area are not difficult, and the game, in direct ratio to the species involved and the energy of the poachers, disappears. To take a concrete example. An agreement between the British and Italian Governments stipulates that the importation of ivory and rhinoceros-horn between Kenya and Italian Somaliland is only to be permitted through certified ports of entry, and then only if these articles are accompanied by certificates of legal possession. Captured contraband may be confiscated and the owner prosecuted.

This is the first agreement of its kind of recent years, and an advanced step in the right direction. In time, probably too late, we may hope

for the international standardisation of game laws, for they should know no boundaries.

The International Conference for the Protection of the Fauna and Flora of Africa was held in London in November, 1933. The following countries were represented: Great Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Spain, South Africa, Egypt, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and Abyssinia. The representatives of all these countries signed the convention, with the exception of those from Abyssinia, who were unable to do so until the text had been submitted to their Government.

As has been pointed out, when everyone is anxious to help, it seems a foregone conclusion that on the majority of points under discussion agreement will be simple. Theoretically, everything may appear so; in reality, the difficulties are great. Rights already existing have to be respected. Long-established customs are hard to abrogate.

The chief points before the conference were:

1. The establishment of national parks.
2. Control of the disposal of game trophies.
3. Preservation of the rarer species.
4. The prevention of unduly destructive methods of hunting.

That an agreement was signed is something, but a conference, unless ratified, is useless. Lord Onslow, the chairman, realising this, tactfully

endeavoured to frame each clause in such a way that there was nothing in the wording to prevent this desirable consummation. That he succeeded is probable. An important agreed point was that periodic conferences should be held to examine the workings of the present convention. It was also agreed that within four years another conference shall be called. The one under discussion was the first since 1900.

It is unfortunate that in agreeing to the necessity for the formation of national parks the phrase "*or* strict nature reserves" should have been interpolated, for, as I have pointed out, a national park is a permanent institution, whereas a reserve is temporary.

The ivory question was one of the chief points under discussion, and although it was agreed that "in principle all found ivory and other trophies shall belong to the Government," the ensuing result is doubtful, owing to the ambiguity of the phrasing.

In effect, the result of the conference is that anyone who wishes to evade its provisions can do so, though those who desire loyally to carry them out will give a great impetus to the furtherance of the motives for which it was called.

Generally speaking, the principal animals standing in need of protection, though not, perhaps, threatened with immediate extinction, are:

The elephant. These are still plentiful in

certain places, but slow in development, and an object of continuous slaughter owing to the commercial value of their tusks.

The Abyssinian ibex. This fine animal is at present found only in a limited area in the highlands of Abyssinia. Now that the natives are so much better armed, they stand but a poor chance unless the Abyssinian Government gives them absolute and effective protection.

The bubal, the Cape, and Hunter's hartebeestes.

The white rhinoceros, rarest of all the large mammals, which is absolutely protected.

The mountain zebra, extinct already save in two localities in South Africa.

The bontebok and blesbok, which, formerly existing in vast numbers in South Africa, are now, as truly wild animals, non-existent. The last survivors linger on privately owned land or in national parks.

The white-tailed gnu, which is in a similar state.

The Vaal rhebok, which, "though still fairly numerous in certain localities," is one of the most seriously threatened species of South African game.

The gemsbuck, finest of all the oryx family, and still numerous in the waterless districts of the Kalahari, "cannot be expected to survive long outside sanctuaries."

The sable antelope. Still found in fairly large

numbers in certain districts. The giant sable, discovered by Mr. H. F. Varian in 1913 in Angola, is much persecuted for the sake of its magnificent horns. Its habitat is local, and though scheduled as protected by the Government of Angola in 1930, unless that protection is rendered really effective (for local Portuguese traders have discovered the commercial value of its horns), it is threatened with extinction.

The addax. Protected, it is true, by the nature of its habitat in the same way as is the gemsbuck, and possibly to a greater extent. The growing facilities of travel have rendered easy of access places which have heretofore been considered impracticable of approach. That the addax is not outside the range of possible extinction may be gathered when we read that in certain districts it has ceased to exist "owing to being machine-gunned by Italian military patrols."

The eland. Gradually becoming scarcer, though not in danger of immediate extinction, its ultimate chance of survival seems to lie in domestication. A docile animal, its meat is the best of all game animals to be found in Africa, and the milk makes excellent butter.

The nyala, one of the rarest of the large African game animals, is very local in its distribution, as is the case with the mountain nyala discovered in 1910. Both species live in dense jungle, which is their best means of protection.

The North African red deer is well protected by the Tunisian game laws, and permits to shoot it are hard to procure. Though poached, it is believed to be slightly increasing in numbers.

I have in these pages mentioned more than once my old friend Captain H. C. Brocklehurst. No one at all conversant with the questions relating to African game and its preservation is unaware of the splendid work he carried out as Game Warden in the Sudan, nor of the authority with which he is entitled to speak on any matter connected with the subject. I make no apology for quoting in full the following letter:

"So far as the Sudan is concerned, and I think this applies to other countries as well, the amount of game killed by officials and tourists is negligible compared to that killed by natives. Too much stress is laid on the wretched licence-holder, who does little or no harm and is out for big heads or old males, and scarcely ever kills females except by mistake.

"There is one exception to this, and that is the white rhinoceros. The white hunter is after a long horn which is invariably carried by the female, and in this case I think the white man does, or used to do, more harm than the native.

"Since the administration of the country, which put a stop to tribal warfare, the native can wander into country other than his own;

he has more leisure for hunting and a much larger field. To a native all game is 'meat,' and he cares nothing whether they are males, females, or calves. If he can he will slaughter the whole herd just for the pure joy of killing, whether he wants the meat or not. I have seen this done on more than one occasion, and it is impossible to stop it. Not many years ago there were several cases in the Sudan where herds of eighty, and in one case over two hundred, elephants were slaughtered in a ring of fire. How could they possibly eat two hundred elephants before the meat went bad?

"However, there is little fear of the elephant becoming extinct in the Sudan, owing to the thousands of square miles of 'Sudd,' which forms a natural sanctuary. As a matter of fact, they are actually on the increase, partly due to persecution by Belgian native hunters over the border, who slaughter some three hundred a year to feed the natives working on the Moto and Kilo gold-mines.

"On the east as well they are increasing. They have been so harried by the Abyssinian hunters that they now seek comparative peace on the Atbara and Setit. I estimated that there were nearly four times as many there in 1928 as there were in 1923.

"Personally, I think the motor-car is more of an asset than a liability in the preservation of game. In the 'good old days,' that even you

and I remember well, we toiled along with a string of hungry porters, doing our 10 to 20 miles a day, and we shot game to feed our boys and vary the monotony. Nowadays a man can go in a day what used to take us two weeks or even more, and his main object seems to be to get to his journey's end as quickly as possible.

"Of course there are cases of shooting from motor-cars, but these are usually in the vicinity of some town, and the culprits are generally local merchants.

"I am sure that the only really effective method of preserving certain beasts, such as elephant, rhino, hippo, etc., is the confiscation of ivory horns, hides, etc., at *ports*. In the case of the elephant, I see no reason why the weight of warrantable ivory should not be kept *internationally* at 28 lbs., as this weight, almost without exception, includes all female tusks. Ivory should be a Government monopoly. Otherwise there can never be any real control.

"Parks are all very well and a splendid institution, but it is essential that all natives should be moved out of the area.

"In a country like the Sudan it would be impossible to form a park in which you could concentrate all the various species. It certainly would be delightful to see addax, ibex, sitatunga, giant eland, and bongo, all sporting together, but I don't see how you are going to

manage it! The slaughter of giraffe, addax, ostrich, and many others still goes on unabated. Once, when I remonstrated with the Government about the former, I was told that it provided an outlet for the warlike spirit of the Arabs !"

Shooting from cars or aeroplanes should be prohibited universally, though I agree that the danger apprehended at one time, largely owing to the fact that it was checked at the start, is not so great as was at first feared. A great many people—the genuine sportsman, in fact—would not dream of running down game in a motor-car. It is not the genuine sportsman for whom it is necessary to legislate. There are great difficulties to be overcome owing to the impossibility in many cases of catching the offender red-handed. To use a motor-car to get within reasonable distance of game may be a perfectly legitimate method of approach. To use the same motor-car for the purpose of systematically rounding up or driving game, forms of "sport" employed at times by people who should know better, cannot be too strongly condemned. Confiscation of his licence should be the least punishment meted out to the culprit. Were it not for the loss of prestige in a country inhabited by an indigenous native population, I should like to see anyone, whoever he might be, imprisoned without the option of a fine. The widest publicity should be given to all such offences coming

to the notice of the authorities. In Tanganyika, not only is the hunting of game by means of motor-cars or aeroplanes prohibited, as is the case in Kenya, but the use of " dazzle " lights also.

In his fascinating book, " Something New out of Africa," beautifully illustrated by photographs taken from the air, H. W. writes: " At the outset I should perhaps emphasise that no harm was occasioned man or beast in the process of taking these photographs. The game behaved with considerable dignity and with a sense of protection for their young of which they might well be proud. If an aeroplane flies low, the beasts run from it; but only as we might ourselves run from any low-flying aeroplane we saw for the first time. They soon stop and look with interest at the huge locust-like creature buzzing about them. I have never seen them run more than a hundred yards or so, and then only naturally, and as is their normal behaviour in the bush. I mention this because it would be intolerable were game in any way injured by low-flying aircraft. Were a pilot misguided enough to dive repeatedly on a herd, he might upset them. In my opinion, however, nothing short of continuous treatment like this day after day would worry them. But because there is the possibility that such action might do damage, and more largely because it is unsporting and bad flying, I most strongly deprecate flying low

over game; and I feel confident that the Game Wardens in Africa will agree with me. . . . I can safely say that seeing and photographing game from the bush and from the air is infinitely less cruel than the indiscriminate shooting so frequently practised by unskilled sportsmen, who pay their fees and are allowed their toll of heads. . . . Frankly, I do not believe that flying makes any difference to big game as long as they are not worried. . . . Two hundred feet above the ground is a useful height" (at which to take photographs).[1]

No one will quarrel with the temperate common sense of these views. It is shooting from aeroplanes that should be universally prohibited. Another regulation should prohibit any person, not being a native, from acting as a professional hunter without taking out a licence, which should not authorise the bearer to shoot game himself. Such persons would then have every inducement to report any misdemeanours committed by those employing them.

In Kenya white hunters are not licensed as such. In a recent letter Captain A. T. A. Ritchie, the Game Warden of Kenya, writes: "White hunters are at last doing what I have

[1] Elephants are particularly liable to damage owing to low flying aeroplanes, especially cows and calves. The French, who have gone into the matter, consider 4,000 feet the minimum altitude at which photographs can safely be taken. Having no experience of flying myself, I leave this point to the expert to decide.

been at them for years to do—forming a white hunters' association, which will do a lot of good in many ways, not the least of which will be that they will be articulate."

An excellent enactment in the game laws of Kenya states that: "In the event of cruelty or wasteful killing or wounding persisted in by the holder of a game licence after warning, any administrative officer or game ranger may suspend the licence, and shall refer the question of its cancellation to the Governor."

In a recently published book by an American the epitaph of the early hunters of big game is written in one sentence: "There were various methods of hunting lions before the automobile came to Africa to stay."

The automobile, in the opinion of many, is the prime cause of much that is wrong in the world today. It has its advantages, so has that devilish instrument the telephone. Whether we should have been happier without these adjuncts to civilisation is open to discussion. They have no doubt helped to keep the world spinning in headlong career, but they have killed leisure and much that it implied.

That the motor-car has helped to a great extent the rapidity with which the large fauna is being destroyed cannot be doubted. When the difficulties which lie in the way of achievement have been removed, the value of the achievement itself is diminished. The advent of the

internal combustion engine, by enabling us to hurl our bodies with great rapidity from place to place, has rendered possible the accomplishment of journeys, formerly a matter of weeks or months, within the space of a few days. Those who fifty years ago would have hesitated to embark on a long and tedious journey, involving dangers and hardship to which they were unaccustomed and ill-suited to endure, gaily start for the wilds of yesterday chaperoned by a white hunter who is paid to face dangers they are unlikely to encounter, and fortified by the productions of Messrs. Ford and Fortnum and Mason.

I am not a persistent *laudator temporis acti*, in spite of the fact that I often wish I had been born about 1835. The sentence which I have quoted does, however, give rise to rather melancholy thoughts. The old big game hunter cannot be altogether acquitted. Major Stevenson Hamilton, who wrote one of the best books on African game ever penned, quotes from a letter he received from one who had hunted in the seventies of the last century. In ten weeks he and a companion slaughtered 240 buffalo. He also indulged in the " sport " of galloping elands to a standstill. These two incidents do not " necessarily imply any special ruthlessness in the gentleman himself, who merely followed the reckless butchering fashion of his day. . . . The so-called hunters of those days were not hunters

at all in the true sense of the word. Game swarmed, and they simply chased it and shot down the herds; it was not even necessary to be an average good shot to be successful in destroying wild life at that time." This, no doubt, is perfectly true, but all hunters were not butchers, and hunting dangerous game in the days of muzzle-loading rifles was dangerous. The true sportsman who hunts today is content with a much smaller bag, but he takes trouble to secure good heads; the worst type, as of old, is simply out for blood.

Though the haunts of game are easier to reach, those who visit them are fewer than was the case thirty years ago, for with increased facilities have come increased expenses. The young man of moderate means who was content to live hard, spend a moderate amount of money and a good deal of time in pursuit of his ideal has given place to the wealthy man of middle age prepared to spend an unlimited amount of money and very little time.

I know one white hunter who flew from England to Nairobi, where he met his millionaire employer. They then flew to their hunting ground, where cars were in waiting. Here they spent several weeks. He then flew back to Kenya, met another party, hunted with them, flew to the Sudan, and so back to England. Such a journey thirty years ago would have occupied eight or nine months. He did it in about three.

But the cost was high. There are only certain places where men of the type who want to shoot in this manner can go, and they are nearly all in Africa. Here one can shoot in greater comfort than anywhere, if money is no object. Modern transport provides the luxury-loving sportsman with the same aids to creature consolation as he expects at home, whilst physical exertion is reduced to a minimum. This sort of excursion may furnish a very pleasant holiday, but it is merely a travesty of real hunting. It is on the great plateaux or amid the huge mountain ranges of Asia that the blue riband of big game hunting is to be found, for the pursuit of a carefully selected animal on ground of his own choosing, preferably in hill country, is the highest form of such sport. Every head of mountain game has to be toiled for, and the owner of such heads must have given the best part of himself to have obtained them.

It is not amid the high hills that the greatest destruction of the large fauna takes place. Save when they are harried to death by native hunters, usually from the presumed value attached to the medicinal properties portions of them are supposed to possess, such animals will survive. It is chiefly on the plains that the greatest loss is to be feared, and in such plains, vast park-like spaces where the employment of a car is easy, Africa abounds. It is here that future generations, if we are worthy of the trust imposed

on us, will praise our foresight; it is here that they will have opportunities of seeing a remnant of the vast herds which formerly roamed at will; it is here, perhaps, that they will say, as we have said, "I wish that I had lived in those days." It depends on us whether this is so, or whether the visitor to Africa years hence, descending from his aeroplane, gazes only at the silent places and the shadows of clouds passing across their empty loneliness.